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Some foundation truths of the  
Christian faith





# Some Foundation Truths of the Christian Faith

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To  
E. L. D. L.

Whose help and inspiration  
have been a constant en-  
couragement and incentive.



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# Some Foundation Truths of the Christian Faith

## CHAPTER I

### THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF GOD

Man, who has been described as incurably religious, has always sought an answer to the age-old question; What is God. He has looked into the heart of nature and tried to find out what lies beneath and behind the world. He has penetrated ever more and more deeply the mysteries of life and being, seeking to discover the ultimate truth. He has let his imagination have rein, and pictured for himself divine beings, visible and invisible. He has listened to the still small voice within him, and given play to the religious instinct with which he was born, and he has felt and seen and known God. Or he has yielded himself to the unfolding of truths by which men have known God better from age to age as He spake by the prophets and last of all by His Son. He has seen God, and worshipped Him, offering sacrifices; and by prayers and praises shown his dependence upon Him. In all

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these and countless other ways man has sought to know God.

And the answers have given him philosophy and theology and the outward expression of religion. But we need to remember that these are not the same; that Philosophy "seeks to discover and exhibit the ultimate truths of being and life without recourse to supernatural revelation"; that Theology "treats of God and of whatsoever in any manner pertains to Him, in so far as it does pertain to Him"; and that Religion is the natural response of the soul of man as he recognises God. Aubrey More suggests the distinction between theology and religion in his essay in *Lux Mundi*. Man sees God and worships; This is religion: Man thinks about God and reasons concerning His revelation of Himself; This is theology: Man tries to solve the riddle of the Universe by the power of his own intellect and to bring into a systematic whole all that he has found in the solution; and This is philosophy.

We need to remember the distinction, and to be certain, further, that a man who seeks to discover the ultimate truths of life and being, nay also, the man who reasons about God and the things that concern Him, may be both earnest and honest and yet utterly without real religion. We all know people who are religious, i. e. see God and worship Him, and seek to live as He has taught them, and yet never think or philosophize, who are utterly uninterested in the reason

for things, or the relationships between the parts of God's truth. They make no pretense at either theology or philosophy. But such people are exceptional. Most men and women want to know what they believe and why; and with most of us our belief shows itself in our life.

Our problem is (1) to outline the fundamental factors in the Christian idea of God; (2) to examine two or three of the questions which philosophy raises about these; and (3) to see very briefly what is the religious value of the Christian truth about God.

## I

The Christian idea of God is stated for us very definitely in our Prayer Book. We shall find there certain great fundamental truths formally put, upon which our whole conception is built. As children we learned the Apostles' Creed, and then we found that in it we had learned "to believe in God the Father, who hath made me and all the world; Secondly in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind; and thirdly in God the Holy Ghost who sanctifieth me and all the people of God." Our formal statements carry us much further for we also learned very shortly, as we became familiar with the Nicene Creed, that we believed in One God, and yet we immediately went on to speak of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, three divine

Persons in that same One God. The First Article of Religion gives us a more formal definition of God than the Creed does, for the Article is put into more distinctly theological language. It reads: "There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

The old saying "our prayers show our beliefs" (*lex orandi, lex credendi*) points to another evidence of the formal statements of the Christian Idea of God. No one can fail to find in the Prayer Book the certain belief that there is a Divine Being, Almighty, Everlasting, of infinite power and holiness, Who is the object of our devotions, and that we know Him by the Triune Name of the Gospel: "The Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost," Who is addressed in the Litany as "Holy Blessed and Glorious Trinity, Three Persons and One God." And further the Prayer Book shows from beginning to end that God Whom we worship is spirit, not matter, and that our knowledge of Him comes to us originally by His own unfolding of Himself.

The Christian conception of God, however, did not originate in Christianity; not even in the teaching of its Founder. Behind Christianity lie the centuries of Judaism, and the Gospel

revelation, the teachings of Jesus Christ, are built quite frankly upon that which had come to men in the Law and the Prophets. St. Augustine's celebrated sentence; "The New Testament lies hid in the Old, the Old is laid open in the New," is profoundly true. Our Lord Himself tells us that He did not come to "destroy the Law and the Prophets." Not the least corner of them was to cease until it had completely fulfilled its purpose. His intention was to bring to its fruition, to perfect and complete, to unfold and to expand those great truths which the older generations had only partly known and still less fully grasped.

The peculiar truth which the Old Testament enshrines and unfolds, the great revelation of the Law and the Prophets, is the Idea of God. And it is particularly this idea, this revelation, which our Lord took and perfected. But to understand His teaching one must never forget the beginnings in the Old Testament teaching which our Lord enriched. As St. John says in the preface to his Gospel—and none of the Apostles has put the truth about God more simply and more fully than he—"No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son Who is in the bosom of the Father He hath declared Him." And the word which St. John uses here means 'to bring out in its fulness.'

There is always, today, an element of difficulty in dealing with the Old Testament record of God's revelation, because scholars, and still more

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the ordinary Christians, are not agreed as to the value of that record, nor the dates when its several parts were written and put into their present form. I will make no attempt even to touch upon this controversy more than to say that we must keep clear these facts. There is no question that the revelation of which the Old Testament is the record was gradually given. God unfolded truths as men were able to understand them and to take them into their own lives as a part of the motives which governed those lives. The task of Criticism is, in part, to trace out the steps by which God led Israel along the way of the unfolding, by which they progressed as they received the revelation; and, if we are to understand what lies behind the full revelation given by our Lord, we must try to get some idea of the elements which entered into the older belief. But there is a second truth quite as important as this, which men are apt to forget. Even under advanced views of development and of criticism, it is quite clear that, for more than a century before the Lord began to teach, the Old Testament record was accepted as the true story of the development of Israel's life and faith, and that the foundations upon which our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles built was that Law and the Prophets in its present form.

We want to find first what are the most outstanding truths of the Old Testament record of those earlier revelations. And at the same time we must remember that the Apostle's words are

true beyond all question: "God, Who in times past spoke to our ancestors by the prophets in many elements and in many ways, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son." The Old Testament revelation cannot be understood until we reach the completion of it and the balancing of it in the New Testament. We must constantly turn from Moses and Isaiah and all that wonderful galaxy to Him Whom they foretold, and seek at His lips the fuller truths which bind them all into one.

The Jewish Creed was very short and very simple. It had but one article; "Hear, O Israel, the LORD thy God is One God." The foundation truth about God is this: There is but One God and God is but One. We are so familiar with this truth that we often fail to grasp its real significance to Israel. The people of Israel were not a people unique and peculiar, alone in the great world of men. They were kinsmen to numerous other nations and tribes; and though they were in time hedged about and shielded as the Truth-bearers of God's revelation they were by ancestry and in association Semites. The Semitic traditions, the racial answers to the great problems of the Creation and the like, were their inheritance. They came into Egypt, and they came forth from it, not new born, full grown, Minerva-like, but with a past and a heritage of belief and practise in which they constantly showed their kindred to other nations. But in spite of this their records show that these

old traditions and inherited explanations were purged of the Semitic polytheism with its lower moral tone, and when they were put into writing they were shot through and through with the belief that the God of Israel was the One True God. We can get glimpses of the difficulty with which they learned this truth, not as a matter of fact, but as a living belief. The scene on Mt. Carmel tells of a very uncertain acceptance of the supremacy of Jehovah. Israel by no means believed, at that time, in but one God; even though the prophet saw the truth as others had before him. Hosea emphasizes the reality of Jehovah as the only saviour and throws this back to the days of the deliverance. Micah speaks of Him as the Lord of the whole earth. Isaiah in his vision hears the angelic chorus sing praises to Him whose glory fills the whole earth. In later years Isaiah—the “unknown prophet of the Captivity” some people call the writer of these chapters—declares that the gods of the heathen are but vanity, while it is the LORD who made the heavens. The glorious supremacy of the LORD over the whole creation, ‘the LORD Who fainteth not nor is weary,’ is the climax of that wonderful fortieth chapter with which the second part of the Book of Isaiah begins. By whatever steps, the truth was grasped long, long before the days of our LORD, and the Jew believed that Jehovah, the God of Moses and the Prophets, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, was supreme, one, and the only God. The monotheism of the

great eighth century prophets had, through the fiery furnace of the Captivity, become the common belief of the men of Israel. And this fundamental truth is the beginning of the Christian Faith as it finds expression in the Nicene Creed: "I believe in One God."

The Christian revelation does not stop with the first article of its belief. When Pliny wrote to the Emperor Trajan in the year 112 A. D. that the Christians sang hymns to Christ as to God he was but bearing witness to the outstanding truth of Christianity. On last analysis Christianity is not a religion of a certain type of worship, of a special code of morals, nor a peculiar ideal of living; and these alone. Christianity is a profound vital belief in Jesus Christ as God and in these other things because of that. I shall not stop to prove this now; it will come up in the next chapter. But the Christian idea of God goes still further. Jesus Christ is not content with asserting His own Deity. He is equally clear, though it is in a more condensed statement, that the Holy Ghost is also God. He gives no argument; He states the fact. And finally after His Resurrection, when He gives the final commission to the Apostles He links together the Holy Ghost and Himself with the Father under one Name.

How can this be? The Christian Church has never failed to make this the central truth of the religion which she teaches. The story of her life, is, in a true sense, the story of the effort

men have made to explain this truth and to relate it to the facts of the universe and to the life of men. When we say that Jesus Christ is God and that the Holy Ghost is God and that They two with the Father, Who is God, are not Three but One, what do we mean? Is it simply that God manifests Himself now under one form and later under another? But if so how could the Father and the Son both exist at once? Is it simply an "economic Trinity," i. e. that the three names refer to three forms of divine activity, Creator and Redeemer and Sanctifier, but nothing more than this and with no reference to an eternal relationship? Do we mean that Jehovah is one thing in Himself and another as men speak of His activity? But after all the Christian Name for God is not Jehovah, except in a very limited sense. The true Christian Name of God is that which our Lord Himself gives us; Father, Son and Holy Ghost; and this Name tells us of the essential Character of God, not a temporary revelation. The lesson of Moses and the Prophets was to teach men that God is One, the Unity of the Godhead; Jesus Christ taught in what sense He is One,<sup>1</sup> and that the unity is not solitariness but a life within the Unity which is expressed under the Name which the Son Himself gave us.

<sup>1</sup> Thus whereas the Jews were only taught that God is one numerically—that there is no other God but He—He has revealed to Christians in addition to this what the nature of His unity is—that He is three Persons in one God. Strong. *The Incarnation of God*, p. 3

Israel not only learned that God is one. They also learned that He is personal. He is no far off force, not an abstraction of the intellect but a living Being, with all the elements which make, in us, what we call Person. He possesses, *in extenso*, those things which we find in ourselves as the highest type of life. He has power, which finds ways to express Himself as He will and as He chooses. He is conscious of His own Being and His own characteristics, so that He can reveal them to others who are not He. And as we shall see, deep within His mysterious life, there is that thing which we call love. Bishop Gore has put this in his volume "Belief in God" in these words: "He is a being of deliberate will and energetic action, approving and disapproving, loving and hating, judging and blessing, who not only can respond to man's advances and prayers, but who from the beginning has been, and always is, taking the initiative in willing and acting; whose will is to be discerned behind everything that happens, yet who also appears as acting more intensely here than there, in the execution of particular individual purpose."<sup>1</sup>

It is here that the New Testament revelation goes further along the line of God's unfolding of the truth about Himself. The God on Sinai who revealed Himself to Moses under the name Jehovah, the God who is, the Self-existent, personal, God, and showed in the vision to Isaiah that He is the God of the whole earth, was not only

<sup>1</sup> P. 113

deeply personal in the innermost recesses of His Being but in the unity of that Godhead there was not one Person but three Persons. Jesus Christ revealed a personal Father, side by side with Himself as a personal Son, who derived all He had from that Father, and yet was side by side with Him, as St. John put it, from before time began; "God of God" as the Creed states it, Truly God and yet deriving His Deity from the Father who is with Him eternal. So in like manner He showed the Holy Spirit, not in any sense as a mere divine influence and power, but as in Himself distinctly a person thinking and acting and revealing Himself to others. The problem which this statement raises is the great problem on the speculative and philosophical side of the Christian religion. Granted that there is a God; how, philosophically, can you explain the Trinity? Yet there the fact stands as a primary truth of the Christian idea of God.

God is not only One and the Only God, He is not merely personal, He is Holy. The Old Testament revelation makes the moral character of God stand out very clearly. We feel the necessity for this belief, for we cannot think of a God who is not at least up to our standards of morals. An "imperfect" God would be no God to us. We could never be content with a God who is less than the best that we can imagine. It is in this revelation of the moral character, the inner life of God, that the New Testament outreaches the Old. I cannot stop now to give the Old Testa-

ment details of that revelation. Two points must suffice and these are most familiar. Micah gives us the first of them when he writes "What doth the LORD require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?" The whole of the Old Testament teaching of righteousness is built up on the idea of fulfilling what is required, and the God who demands this of men shows it in His own relationships with them. He is a covenant God, from the beginning of the days of Abraham. This is the underlying conception of the religion which is based on the revelation to Moses. God makes promises which they can be sure He will fulfil if they will permit it. For His promises are not mere soft words with no sense of right in them. They are promises based upon the fulfilment, on Israel's part, of an obligation which rests on them. Side by side with this teaching of God as righteous, His justice we call it, is the revelation of His holiness. We find this in the account of the vision which Moses had at the bush, when God bade him put off his shoes from off his feet for the ground on which he stood was holy, holy because it is there that He is revealing Himself. We see the same truth in Isaiah's experience when he cries out, after seeing God in all His glory in the midst of the heavenly courts; "Woe is me for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King the LORD of Hosts." But most of all we get this

truth about God's holiness in the worship of Israel. Whenever it may have come in, whether from Mosaic days or later, there is no doubt that the message of the Day of the Atonement was well understood in Christ's time, and the meaning of that day's worship was the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man, a God so holy that unless cleansed year after year even His chosen people could not come to worship Him according to His own commandment.

The true idea of the inner life of God is, however, not found in the Old Testament. We must turn to the New Testament and find it in the revelation of our Lord. No where is the truth of St. John's words made more clear than here. No aspect of God is "declared" by the Son as truly as this, the inner life of God. But how does He do it? First and foremost in His own life. "What Jesus Christ was God is and man must be, and by the grace of God can be" is a sentence we should never forget. If we would know God we find Him best revealed in Jesus Christ. And of all the Evangelists none phrases it more clearly than St. John, though St. Luke in the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Prodigal Son gives, in the Master's own words, as clear a picture as St. John does. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," that is the phrase we find in St. John, and as the old Apostle thinks back across the more than half century of prayer and worship and preaching which separated him from

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the earthly life of the Son he knew as perhaps none other knew before him that in the deepest, truest sense, if one would know God, one cannot put it more simply nor more fully than in the words "God is love."

Modern teachers are realizing that there are realms unreached, untouched by the microscope and telescope, that there are great "values," to use the term of philosophy, whose expression is to be found in the lives of men, in their poetry and art and religion. Of these values three are often spoken of as being the highest; the good, the beautiful and the true. We are being again reminded that the good and the beautiful and the true are not merely the sum-total of the things which men see and know and do and describe in these terms, but that in some sense they themselves are the evidence, partial and incomplete yet unimpeachable, that there is a good and beautiful and true beyond and above the sum total of which what we see are so to say its rays. But is there not a still higher value, which gathers into itself, not as a whole gathers its parts but rather as the source and center of them all, that long line of deeds of mercy and sympathy and kindness and love which have marked human life and never more wonderfully than in the life of Jesus Christ? Is not love itself a great reality, of which all our experiences of human love are but shadows or glimmerings? Is it not so that, realizing this, St. John says not that God loves, but that God is Love?

If this is true, as I believe it is, then we can go a bit deeper into the mystery of God's inner life and see that if He is truly Love He must be Triune. For love can only fully and perfectly exist, real love I mean, between persons.<sup>1</sup> We cannot think of it save as a feeling between two persons.

I have not exhausted the Old Testament revelation of God but I have gone far enough to give us a clear idea of what is made known. There is, however, a special development in the idea of God which is given in the New Testament without which we should be in difficulty. In the Old Testament record, there is no sharp understanding and statement of God's relation to the material universe, save as its Creator. Has God a form? Is He imaginable? Is He picturable? Is He material? They might not have put it in these words, but the Jews, the best of them, wanted to see God. The prophet ventured to ask God to reveal Himself to him and the only revelation which God would give him was the quiet voice as of the evening zephyr. True He showed Himself through His angels, created messengers, and through His prophets, men in whom His Spirit dwelt, but this did not suffice. Men wanted to see God. I think that this explains somewhat the intense desire for idols which marked the early life of Israel, and it was only with difficulty that God made them understand

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Illingworth, *Divine Immanence*, pp. 186, 187.

that they could not see Him nor could they picture Him in the form of anything created in heaven above nor in the earth beneath nor in the waters under the earth. Then our Lord came and His conversation with the woman of Samaria taught the truth which we accept as a commonplace and do not understand; "God is spirit." It is important to remember that what our Lord said is not "God is a spirit" but "God is spirit." St. John again puts it clearly for us when he says: "No man hath seen God at any time."

The problem for thinking men today is largely concerned with the problem of spirit and matter and the relation between them. We must not be led aside by that now, but we must remember and that very clearly, that God is absolutely incorporeal. He has nothing like a material body. He cannot be seen by physical eyes. He is as the Article puts it "without body, parts, or passions." Neither, therefore, can He be thought of as in any one particular place for He is above all space and beyond space and yet He does reveal Himself in space to men in particular ways, and through special persons and finally in and through His Incarnate Son.

God, supreme over all, above all, is also in all and through all. The question of the relation between God and the created universe, I do not mean as the Creator of it, but the Universe as created, is one which we must not shrink from

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considering. The truth perhaps is suggested in these familiar words of Tennyson:

“Little flower—but *if* I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is.”

for within the flower lies not merely the revelation of God’s divine creative force, but the presence of God Himself. As Fenélon says: “I see God in everything.” Both writers are but putting in different words the truth of the Apostle’s declaration when he wrote the words I have just quoted: “Who is above all and through all and in you all.” The Transcendence and the Immanence of God, that He is above all, i. e. independent of the whole of the universe, and yet through all, i. e. absolutely present in it, has never been put more clearly than in Abelard’s Rhythm of the Trinity, which should be read in the original Latin to appreciate its full power.

“Above all, Under all, Outside all, and Within all;  
Within, yet not shut in; Outside, yet not shut out;  
Under all, yet not withdrawn; Over all, yet not up-  
lifted;  
Thou art wholly over by possessing it; under by  
holding it up;  
Outside by embracing it; within by filling it.  
Within, yet never art Thou restrained; without, yet  
never dissipated;  
Beneath, yet never art Thou wearied; above yet none  
upholds Thee.”

## II

Is God Knowable? Can mere man, with his finite mind, really know God? These questions bring us at once not only to a matter of theology but to one of the great philosophical problems. Is the answer to the search for the final explanation of the universe and of life the answer of the atheistic agnostic, God cannot be known, we cannot find Him?

We need at the very outset to keep clear in our minds the distinction between a knowledge that is based upon mathematical certainty and one that is based upon such a cumulative body of evidence that there is, in the phrase of the law, "no reasonable ground for doubt." To know God as we know the exact sciences, with mathematical certainty, beyond any possibility of doubt, is quite impossible. This fact of religion and of the philosophy which underlies religion has always been recognized. Nevertheless there are certain so called proofs of God's existence whose value we must recognize. They vary in the impression which they make upon us, and in the force with which they appeal to our reason. No one of them in and of itself is conclusive. The world-wide belief in God which no tribe or people has ever lacked, the evidence of design and purpose, the witness of the moral sense, to name but a few, are not positive proofs. But this is true: they are cumulative; lines of evidence which converge upon a focus they can-

not reach. Their direction is certain and yet each of them vanishes into a mist through which knowledge cannot penetrate, but faith can find a way. And yet, after all, this knowledge of God does suffice for men to live by it. Every one does not feel this sufficiency, but, for centuries, human beings have lived and worked and suffered and died and on the basis of that knowledge have hoped for an unending life beyond. We must never forget the evidential value of this fact.

But the question comes back with renewed force: How can I find out God? If He is not to be reached by human reason, how can He be? There is truth, let us freely admit it, in Herbert Spencer's statement that the "Power which the universe manifests to us is inscrutable," but this does not involve the further conclusion which Huxley draws that He is not only unknowable but that He cannot reveal Himself. We must face the facts of religion as honestly as we face the facts of other spheres of human thought. The evidence which these facts supply cannot be lightly cast to the wind as impossible and therefore untrue. And after all there are certain facts. First of them is that very universal belief in a Divine Being to which we referred a few minutes ago. The common consensus of human opinion gives an evidence to the existence of such a Being which demands attention. But how did men get it? In some people it grew out of a reverence for the great men of past days; among others the great powers of nature gave it

shape and form. But when we have said this we have not covered the whole of human experience. On the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea there lived a people whose influence on human history, and especially human religious history, is unequalled, so far does it outreach all other religious influences. I need not name them, but behind all their influence lies this fact of their religious belief: God has revealed Himself. The understanding by which, in far off Ur, Abraham knew God as supreme above all other gods; the burning bush which showed Him to Moses as a personal, living Being; the vision which revealed to Isaiah His wonderful power and holiness, are but scattered examples of that which is the constant factor throughout the Jewish history; God revealed Himself to Moses and the Prophets. "No man by searching could find out God" as Job suggests, but God unveiled Himself to men. The Unknown God, whom the Athenian in his ignorance worshipped, was made known by St. Paul not by argument but by the story of the revelation of Him by His own Son, Whom He raised from the dead.

It is important to keep this truth very clearly in our minds today. The Christian knowledge of God is not something which men have worked out for themselves, though they have worked out the phraseology by which they would express it. The facts beneath are revealed by God Himself, Who whether speaking by the prophets or in the

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Person of His Son has been teaching us. "No one," as St. John says, "has ever seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath revealed Him." God is knowable, but only as He makes Himself known. And furthermore, we must always remember that this knowledge of God has to be through finite means. Our knowledge is all conditioned by the facts of our finite existence, and God's revelation of Himself is likewise conditioned. "We see through a glass darkly" as St. Paul tells us. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them because they are spiritually examined." But because this knowledge of the infinite Spiritual Being is a meditated knowledge, given us through finite means, it does not imply that He is none the less real. We do not comprehend God, i. e. fully understand Him, perfectly know Him; but we can none the less apprehend Him, and hope that the reflection we have now in the mirror of His revelation, however dim and incomplete, will in some future day give place to the vision of the reality when we shall see Him face to face.

There is a second problem which we must touch upon, because it is so greatly to the fore just now, the problem of evolution and the relation of God to nature. The importance of the subject demands a treatment much fuller than is possible here, and I can only indicate a few of the points which are involved. At the forefront

of these we should never forget that evolution is a theory of the method by which the universe has become what it is. It is a modus operandi. But the moment we say this we raise the essential question; Who works? What are the "Laws of Nature"? Are they impersonal forces, or are they human generalizations based upon man's observance of the way things happen? In the last analysis, the "Laws" are man's own explanations and they must reveal the power behind which works through them, rather than a mere impersonal force. Père Didon has expressed this very beautifully in these words: "The Spirit of God is the sovereign force. He commands the general evolution, and presides over the ordered and progressive movement of the universe. For as He entered upon chaos and matter to bring into existence the being which feels, into animal life to produce the being who thinks, He entered into the being who thinks that the earth may give its fruit and that man may see the Saviour arise, the Holy One, the Son of God."<sup>1</sup>

The great divisions between what in older phraseology were called the kingdom of matter, the vegetable kingdom and the animal kingdom and the kingdom of man, are not the only ones in which the Spirit of God can be said to enter. Thomson, in the Gifford Lectures for 1918, 1919,

<sup>1</sup> Bp. Henson has brought out that the very fundamental assumption on which all scientific knowledge is based, the presence of purpose in nature, assumes the fact, though it is not always admitted, that there must be behind the purpose one who purposed.

has traced out the lines of evolution in entire sympathy with the best thought of modern science, but when one has analyzed the problem as he presents it, there remains still the fact that the change from one great group of creatures to another, e. g., to use his own case, that from reptiles to birds, may show a likeness between the two but it also shows the entrance of something new, which was not in the lower order; and is the essential mark of the new. Whence comes this? It cannot evolve of itself for it is not even in the simplest form in the lower order. Revelation says it is the hand of God. Beneath Creation lies the Creator, and in some mysterious way He sustains it. This is especially true in the revelation of God as given in the Old Testament. The nineteenth Psalm which sings, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork"; and the great Psalm of the sea, the one hundred and seventh, which ends "whoso is wise and will observe these things even they shall understand the loving kindness of the LORD" are but two of the countless passages which point out the truth of revelation that God is the Creator of all things visible and invisible. Nor is the New Testament less explicit, though the references are not so frequent. St. Paul's speech at Athens and his opening argument in the Epistle to the Romans bear witness to the truth that God has made Himself known by 'the visible creation, even His eternal power and deity'; while our Lord Him-

self in the Sermon on the Mount emphasises the continual care by God of His creatures.<sup>1</sup>

Over against these two great philosophical problems lie the difficulties which come out of ignorance. God, as an invisible spiritual being, behind and under, above and throughout the Universe, is hard to understand; and there are those to whom this truth comes not as something helpful, but as a difficulty in belief. For such it is sometimes hard to pray when first taught that God is a spiritual and not a material Being. The difficulty is a real one, and yet its answer lies plainly upon the face of the Scriptures. The spiritual Being, absolutely immaterial, has revealed Himself not only through men's minds, but in the person of Jesus Christ, to Whom as a matter of fact we owe the clear teaching of this very truth; and the solution of the difficulty is found in remembering that Jesus Christ is Himself God, and that in and through Him not only do we know God but are enabled to approach Him acceptably in prayer and worship.

### III

The Christian Idea of God is not a mere matter of the intellect. It is pre-eminently practical. It involves consequences. If it be true we can-

<sup>1</sup> It is this fact which explains the miracles, "acts departing from the ordinary processes of nature"; *non contra naturam sed contra qua est nota natura* as St. Augustine phrases it; and acts which challenge attention to some truth or revelation of God.

not ignore it, nor Him Whom it reveals. We must believe in Him; our soul must make that personal self-surrender to Him by which He rules our life, which we call Faith. In the various problems and trials, the difficulties and doubts, as well as the joys and privileges of life, we must find Him and learn to live in dependence upon Him. And furthermore we are forced to feel the responsibility which such certainty brings. Like the Apostles "we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and known."

Too often men are content with this expression of their relation to God Who has revealed Himself. Once more let us turn back to Isaiah or forward to the Revelation. There we see the vision of the very presence of God described, "high and lifted up, and His glory fills the heavens." But we see more than this; we see before Him the angelic hosts praising Him and saying "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy Glory." We see, with St. John, the great multitude which no man can number from every nation and kingdom and people worshipping before Him. The highest expression of our acceptance of the Christian Idea of God is not found merely in a life lived in faith and hope and love; it must show itself in the worship of Him Who sent His only and most dearly beloved Son that we might see Him and know Him and in Him give ourselves completely to fulfil God's purpose for men.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CHRIST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

What does the New Testament tell us about Jesus Christ? What are His claims upon us? These are the most vital questions man can face. But, before we can answer them, we must stop and ask ourselves another; What can we believe, today, about the New Testament?

The real test of the claims of our Lord upon us is not the New Testament. That is the record of what the Church has believed about Him and of what she has thought of sufficient permanent value to preserve. The evidence to the Person of Jesus of Nazareth rests upon a wider foundation than the New Testament, even the fact of the Church herself and her unbroken witness to Him. But after all this is admitted as true—and it is true—the New Testament carries us very near to His Own day, and gives us what purports to be first hand evidence to His life and teaching and thus to Himself. What then, we ask, can we believe about the New Testament?

#### I

On the surface the New Testament is a collection of twenty-seven writings, commonly called

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books, written by different people and, as we shall see, over a period of nearly half a century. Four of these books purport to be portrayals of the life of Jesus Christ, "memoirs of the Apostles" Justin Martyr called them in the second century. The fifth is a second volume of one of the Gospels, known as the Acts of the Apostles. There are thirteen Epistles, letters that is, which claim to be written by St. Paul, one to the Hebrews, seven short letters by four different persons attributed ultimately to Apostles and for that reason included finally in the collection, and last a book called the Apocalypse, or Revelation, of which St. John is the traditional author.

These twenty seven books were collected together during the first half of the second century, but not all at once nor all together. The Epistles of St. Paul seem to have been the earliest collection. The Gospels were grouped later. Some uncertainty existed until well into the third century about the inclusion into the collection of seven of our books: Hebrews, Revelation, St. James, St. Jude, II St. Peter and II and III St. John. The final decision was due, not to any act of councils nor to a formal decree, but to the final acceptance by the Church that they were writings of Apostles which had been used in the Church during the past years, and so were to be believed and accepted as of permanent value.

We must keep clear the distinction between the formation of the books into a collection, which became authoritative as the only collection

of the Sacred Books of the Church, and the writing of the books. Both elements combine to give the New Testament its status in the Church, but the two are quite separate. The finally determining factor was the belief that the books in question came from Apostles, and were therefore first hand evidence to what Jesus Christ said and did and of what the Church of the first century believed; and for this reason they were put into the collection we call the New Testament. We must account for both these elements in any explanation of Inspiration which may be given. The books were written by men filled with the Holy Spirit, and so we call them the writings of inspired men; but also the men who had collected them during the next two centuries, i. e. the Church, were also inspired. Lid-don suggests this idea in his sermon: The Inspiration of Selection.

With possibly one exception all of these books were written in the first century. The investigations of the past century have proved this conclusively. No scholar of reputation disputes the general statement. Let us see what we can say about the books in detail. The earliest collection contains St. Paul's Epistles, which are, with one probable exception, the oldest books. The thirteen epistles which claim to be by him fall at once into two main groups. The earlier group is made up of the ten which were written before or during the Captivity in Rome with the account of which the Acts closes. The other three are

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the so-called Pastoral Epistles, those to St. Timothy and to St. Titus. There is no responsible objector to the first ten, and the sounder criticism of today connects St. Paul very closely with the Pastorals. Some critics hesitating to admit the actual apostolic authorship, ascribe these later letters to a member of St. Paul's company, writing for the Apostle; but the balance of opinion would make St. Paul the actual author of these three short letters, explaining the differences in vocabulary by the change in the subject, and the stress upon the organization as due to the progress of Church life during the decade prior to the fall of Jerusalem.

The other Epistles stand on different grounds. I St. Peter is, no doubt, the work of the Apostle, but the almost overwhelming opinion of even conservative scholars of today is unwilling to accept him as the author of the Second Epistle which bears his name, and dates it, if he is not its author, early in the second century. Of the three Johannine Epistles we can say very certainly that they were written, all of them, by the same man who wrote the fourth Gospel. The Second and Third are very short and this probably explains our failure to find them quoted during the earliest ages, and their omission from the lists of books of that period, so that they fall among what Eusebius called the Disputed Books. The Epistle by St. James is believed by many to be the oldest of all the New Testament writings, and its author is most probably St. James the

Lord's brother, "bishop of Jerusalem," and not the Apostle to whom it was attributed in the third century. A similar explanation tells the story of the Epistle of St. Jude. The most interesting problem is the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews; which was accepted in the West, where it was believed that St. Paul wrote it, and rejected at first in the East where it was thought he did not. The western opinion became the dominant one and the Church accepted it as a part of the Scriptures. No one knows who wrote it, but it was written before the fall of Jerusalem in the year 70 A. D.; and an old second century tradition which attributes it to St. Barnabas has much to commend it. The Revelation has also had a stormy history and men have been divided between St. John the Divine as the author and some one else, and between the days of Nero and those of Domitian. The balance of present day opinion would put it in the days of Nero and make it the work of the Apostle.

When we turn to the Gospels we face the most serious critical problems. We cannot now go into details. Certain facts stand out, as generally accepted. First of all we may believe that the oldest of the Gospels is St. Mark, and that it is the work of the Evangelist whose name it bears, based upon the public teaching of the Apostle Peter; which means that we may quite properly think of St. Peter as the source of this account of our Lord, with John Mark of Jerusalem as a sort of secretary or interpreter. The

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Gospel was written as it stands, save that the closing page was probably lost, and the present ending, 16: 9-20, was added in the second century to make up for the lost conclusion. Closely related, in time, to the earliest Gospel is a collection of Christ's teachings, together with certain narratives, which is described in the celebrated quotation from Papias, the second century scholar, as written in Hebrew by St. Matthew and translated as each one might. We have no copy of this, and it is quite certain that our Gospel of St. Matthew is not that collection. Modern scholarship has constructed out of passages peculiar to St. Matthew and St. Luke a document which men call "Q" which is thought to represent to some degree this earlier writing of St. Matthew. This is one of the widely—I had almost said generally—accepted "results of modern criticism." For myself I am still unconvinced of the truth of it, but it underlies the modern reconstruction and explanation of the Gospel attributed to St. Luke and also that known as St. Matthew's. In the opening section of St. Luke's Gospel he tells us that, in writing his account of the Life of Jesus Christ, he has used the writings and verbal evidence of men who had first hand knowledge. Modern scholars say that of these two were in all probability St. Mark's Gospel and Q, together with a body of additional material which he used in the section beginning at the end of the ninth chapter. In similar fashion St. Matthew's Gospel is believed to be a com-

pilation by some unknown author built up from St. Mark and Q which he uses with a freedom that allows him to amend it to suit the prejudices of his readers. Be this as it may—and again let me register my unwillingness to accept these conclusions as true—we have the three Synoptic Gospels, with their common outline dealing chiefly with the Galilean Ministry of our Lord together with the accounts of the last week in Jerusalem, and containing in addition to the chief body of facts which St. Mark relates much of what the Master taught, together with a number of facts which St. Mark does not relate, and prefaced in both St. Matthew and St. Luke by the two dissimilar but not contradictory accounts of Christ's birth and childhood. The second volume of St. Luke's history is what we call the Acts, ending abruptly with the summary of St. Paul's imprisonment, and written with such accuracy of statement and reference to geographical and political conditions that it is today one of the most trusted of the books of the New Testament.

The final problem, the great problem, is the authorship of the Fourth Gospel, attributed through all the Christian centuries to St. John, the son of Zebedee, the "beloved disciple" of the Master, and for a century and a quarter the center of attack. The outcome of the discussion which that century has produced is first of all the establishment of the approximate date. No longer can any one question that it was written at about the end of the first century. Traditional

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belief on this is right. Furthermore it is quite clear that the Johannine Epistles and the Gospel are by the same man, and the weight of evidence to the Gospel is strengthened by that to the First Epistle. The book is the product of some one who actually lived through the scenes it describes. The marks of the eye-witness are constant, and cannot be explained away. There are problems of the scene of the Ministry, which is Jerusalem rather than Galilee, that need explanation; and, again, the Gospel deals with a different set of truths which are not so different after all; and last the speeches of Jesus Christ in St. John are not like those in St. Matthew. Valid explanations of these discrepancies are not impossible. Jerusalem, the center of religious life and the headquarters of Jewish religious leaders, would of necessity claim some of Christ's time. He would naturally, there, deal with somewhat different problems, or at least handle them in a different way from that which He used in Galilee. Then too, we must admit that St. John, writing more than sixty years after the events, with almost a lifetime of teaching and memory behind him, would assimilate the Master's manner of speech and perhaps even put into his own words what the Lord had said. The evidences for the Apostle's authorship of the Gospel are stronger than the objections; and unless one has invincible prejudice against it one may quite safely say, with Drummond, "In my judgement it is Johannine." The only alternative

possible is that some intimate disciple of the old Apostle, writing for him and at his direction, actually phrased the words so that the witness is St. John's, though the language may be that of his disciple; but of this there is no evidence, neither does it explain the disappearance from history of such a person as the author would be, and there is no need for such an explanation in the facts of the Gospel itself.

The books of the New Testament, then, go back into the first century, and St. James is the oldest of them all, dating about 45 A. D. St. Paul's epistles were all written between 51 and 64, when he was put to death under Nero. The earlier Gospels fall probably between 60 and 70, or a little later. There is some good reason for dating St. Mark and St. Luke in the earlier period and St. Matthew as later. St. John belongs about 95. The rest of the New Testament falls between 60 and 80, save II St. Peter, which if modern views prevail about that writing, belongs in the first part of the second century.

We can say then, in answer to our enquiry, that in the New Testament, we have a collection begun in the second century and completed early in the third, of first century writings, almost all of which had Apostles for their authors; and that all of them bear evidence to what the Church knew and believed about Her Founder, Jesus Christ. We can therefore go back with confidence to these twenty seven books and from them seek fearlessly the answer to our question:

What does the New Testament tell us about Jesus Christ?

## II

There are two ways to approach this question. We can attempt to put ourselves in the position of the Apostles before the Lord's resurrection; and, following the modern cry "Back to Jesus," seek to find in the Gospels the record of Who and what He was. This attempt on the part of a great body of people today, both of scholars and the ordinary student, is in reality an attempt to do the impossible. If we could approach the subject as adults who never had any idea of Jesus Christ, and if we were trained students of history, we might do this; or at least go as far as the records lead us. But we are none of these. No one of us can approach this subject except with the religious experience of our childhood behind us. At the very beginning of that we learned to know of Jesus as the Christ, a fact which the disciples did not know. We were accustomed to worship Him and think of Him as God long, long before we could dream of approaching the problem of the evidence to Him. Few indeed are there who could, therefore, face these questions without prejudice. As Dean J. Armitage Robinson says in his "Thoughts for Teachers of the Bible": "We all of us practically began with the Creed which declares Him to be 'the only begotten Son of God' and 'our

Lord': with the plain statements of His wonderful Birth, His Death and Burial, His wonderful Resurrection and Ascension, and His future Return to Judgment. We have seen Him whole from the outset. In the light of all this we have read the Gospels—read them as the Church reads them and has always read them in her most solemn services, as complementary the one to the other, and with no attempt to distinguish between them. That has been our method of approach, and it has ruled our criticism. We have never felt under an obligation to discover a merely human Jesus. In the main, though not in every detail, it is true to say summarily that we have begun with the teaching of St. Paul with the preincarnate Christ and the great redemptive facts. We have come to the Gospels in the light of the Epistles. And so we have found in the Gospels the mystery which we had learned to expect, and our surprise has been that the Life should after all be so truly and simply human as it there appears."

Furthermore the method is unhistorical in its treatment of our material. The Gospels did not come first, nor do they pretend to give the story of Jesus as a merely human person. Even St. Mark begins the statement, according to the older reading, which cannot be "safely rejected": "The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God"; and St. Luke tells us quite frankly that he is writing in order that Theophilus may have a fuller knowledge about the truths

he had already learned at the mouth of his teacher. The Gospels were written for Christians; and they one and all presuppose the knowledge of the Christ which the Christian had; and it is this presupposition, which underlies all they say, that makes it impossible for us to go back fully into the days when men did not know who Jesus of Nazareth was.

The other approach is the approach from the way of the Acts and the Epistles and this is the historical approach. We see what men who lived in the life time of the Apostles believed about Jesus Christ, what they taught about Him, with what presuppositions they wrote their letters, compiled their histories and recorded their memories of those days when they saw and heard Him and actually felt Him with their own hands. Further this is the more correct method historically because in the Epistles, as I have said, we go back nearer to the days of our Lord's actual life upon earth than we do in the Gospels; they are actually older. I shall therefore begin with them.

The most outstanding fact is the silence of the Epistles concerning the details of the life of our Lord. They all find in Him their inspiration, and He is the very heart of the life of these writers; all depends upon Him, and yet you will find, in the Epistles, almost nothing about His earthly life. This may be due to the fact that men knew those details from the general knowl-

edge. They were known in every bazaar in Palestine as Streeter says. It may also be due to the fact that converts were fully instructed in the facts of that life, and the letters did not concern themselves with these questions. The importance of this latter point must not be overlooked. The Epistles come, each of them, out of an especial situation, and an actual one. They are letters written by living men to living men in a real situation in their own religious lives. They are not, not even Romans nor Hebrews is, tracts, nor theses, nor theological essays. They breathe the breath of a throbbing world and of men who are trying to find out in that world what Jesus Christ would have them to do and who He really is. But for whatever reason, the Epistles are silent about the details of the Life of Christ. They tell us who He is, and how He came into human life; they tell us of His birth, His death, and Resurrection and of His session in Heaven; and in so doing they remind us of the Creed. But there they stop.

Their primary question, on this side, is, Who is Jesus of Nazareth? When St. Peter began to preach in Jerusalem on Pentecost, he had two things to explain; The descent of the Spirit which had drawn the crowd to one place, and Who Jesus is. Consequently we find him, in that first Christian sermon, not only asserting but proving that the gift of which the crowd were witnesses was sent by Jesus of Nazareth, 'a man approved of God among you,' after He had been

exalted by the right hand of God, and that this gift was in entire accord with the prophecy of Joel. But the point of St. Peter's sermon is that 'God had declared by raising Him from the dead' that the One who had sent this gift, whom they knew as Jesus of Nazareth and had crucified, was the Lord and Christ. It is noteworthy that the Apostle is not content with proclaiming that God had made Him Christ, but, and this is the emphatic word, Lord, the term which is regularly used in the Greek Old Testament as the translation of Jehovah. This emphasis reappears over and again in the Apostle's sermons and addresses, so that we are not surprised to read in his sermon to Cornelius that 'Jesus is Lord of all,' and to find the Apostle attributing to Him that which the Jew believed God alone could grant, the forgiveness of sins. The same assertion of belief reappears in St. Peter's First Epistle, along with the interpretation of the great facts of His death and resurrection and the practical consequences of belief in Him by Whom we are reborn, Who is the object of the worship of men and supreme over all created beings, 'angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.'

The Apostles all teach the same great fundamental truths about Jesus Christ; although they express them differently. It is not surprising, therefore, to read throughout St. Paul's epistles passage after passage and to find him building his whole teaching on the fact which he him-

self had learned to believe in the days which followed the Vision on the road to Damascus. He then knew that Jesus was the Christ, that sin and death had not conquered, but that God had declared Him in raising Him from the dead. It was really but a step from this to the belief that Jesus was God and it is not at all surprising to find St. Paul, after a few days with the disciples in Damascus, immediately proclaiming in the synagogues that "Jesus is the Son of God." We cannot follow in detail the story of this declaration as we read it in his epistles. Certain facts stand out, however, and we must not pass them over. The earliest of the epistles were written on the second journey, at Corinth, and in them we find our Lord spoken of as God's Son, who is to come in the last days as Judge, and He is coupled in the salutations with the Father as equal to Him. But before St. Paul had written to the Thessalonians he had been preaching Jesus Crucified as the Christ, and Christ as the Son of God, and had even gone so far as to prove from heathen poetry that God was something far more than the idols of silver and gold, and to assert that He had revealed Himself to them in Jesus, Whom he set before them in such a way that the Athenians believed he was proclaiming Him to be God. There is no real difference in the truths proclaimed though there is a fuller and clearer definition of it in St. Paul's later epistles. Romans leaves no possibility of doubt about the Apostle's belief, which as he told the

Galatians he had received not from a man but from God; and this belief he states very clearly in the beginning of the epistle to the Romans when he says that God had "declared His Son Jesus Christ our Lord to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead." This belief of the Apostle is absolutely fundamental to his whole teaching, for the value of the redemption from sin and the deliverance from its power arises from the fact that He is God's Son, in the likeness of human flesh, to whom worship is due as God blessed for ever, yet Who is, as he writes the Galatians, "born of a woman, born under the law to redeem them who were under the law." It is however in the four epistles called the "Captivity Epistles" that we get the clearest definition of the Person of Jesus Christ. Not only in the celebrated passage of Philippians 2, the Epistle for Palm Sunday, where the absolute Deity and the true humanity are clearly proclaimed; but the pre-existence and supremacy of Him "who is manifested in the flesh" is set forth in clear terms in the opening passages of the Epistle to the Colossians and reappears quite definitely in Ephesians.

There can be no question that what the Apostles believed, and from the Day of Pentecost taught, was that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ of Prophecy and of Jewish expectation, and truly divine. It is important, in view of the development of the Creed to which we shall come

later, to notice very briefly the facts upon which they laid stress. They are all agreed in emphasizing the reality of His humanity though St. Paul alone in the Epistles implies directly the fact of His Virgin birth. The events between His birth and His death are passed over in silence, save for the reference in II St. Peter to the Transfiguration. But the great stress of them all, upon which they base their teaching and by which St. Peter and St. Paul prove the Deity is the fact of Christ's Death and Resurrection. The significance of His Death is never lost to sight with the Apostles. Jesus died, according to their belief, not because of the hatred of the Jews, nor in consequence of the antagonism raised by His teaching, but in order that through it men might obtain forgiveness. This stood for them as the all essential fact of His Ministry, though of course they never disassociated it from His resurrection. To the minds of the Apostles, in contradistinction to the modern view, the important things are the facts of His Being and life rather than the truths which He taught. But neither St. Peter nor St. Paul, still less St. John, stop with the resurrection. Jesus the Christ declared such by the power of the Resurrection is alive today. That is the secret of the Church's life and ministry. Jesus Christ is not only alive, but He is everliving to make intercession for us. The Ministry are gifts from Him, in Whose Name and by Whose power they act; and the Church itself is none less than the Body of

Christ, filled with the Spirit, being gradually perfected and gathering into itself all the families of the earth. No where do we get this belief in the Ascended and active Lord more clearly declared than in the Revelation. The life of the churches comes from Him who stands in their midst and as the object of their worship holds the keys of death and of hell, and sends messages of comfort and guidance, of reproof and exhortation, to the churches under the Apostle's especial care.

The Christ of the New Testament, so far as the Epistles are concerned, is the incarnate Son of God of the Creeds. What do the Gospels tell us about Him? We must remember what we saw a while ago, that the earlier Gospels were written between thirty or forty years after Christ's resurrection and while they give true, trustworthy records of the "memories of the Apostles" they do not pretend to give anything like a history of His life, as we moderns use this term. No one can approach the Gospels to study their witness to Jesus Christ without facing the question of miracles. Are they or are they not possible? What are they? Perhaps the latter question should be faced first and no one has ever put the question more clearly than St. Augustine: Non contra naturam sed contra quam est nota natura, not against, contrary to, Nature but contrary to Nature as it is known. They are interwoven into the Gospel narrative in such a way that you cannot take them out

of it. Either these are true or the records are not true; but no one questions that they were written as true and that the writers understood that they were describing unusual facts. If the Gospels are true then miracles are to be explained either as unusual facts or as facts of which the Apostles give an interpretation which modern men would phrase very differently. The "prejudice of the modern critics" is, as Bishop Gore shows, very strongly against the belief in miracles as non-ordinary events. The Gospels themselves describe them as signs, evidences of a presence which has this unusual power. They are, as it were, "challengers of attention" to some truth or revelation of God and always serving a moral purpose. Men may question today the evidential value of the miracles; miracles may not appeal to the modern mind as they did in the days of the Apostles or of our own fathers, but they are a part of the warp and woof of the Gospels and can neither be taken out nor can they be explained away under the guise of a different manner of speech. This might seem to explain the healing miracles but it will not give any solution of the problem which the nature miracles raise; and the evidence for one is as strong as that for the other. In spite of the modern prejudice we must assert the reasonableness and truth of the miracles which stand out as sign posts to a divine revelation which challenges men's attention.

We are all more or less familiar with the evidences of the Gospels to our Lord's Person and work; but I must not neglect to gather in a few words some of the more important elements in it. He stands in the pages as one who has lived a unique life, with a character which the ages have always recognised as the highest ideal ever set before men. What first strikes one is the strange contradictions in our Lord's character. There never lived a man who was so absolutely humble as He was; "When He was reviled He reviled not again, when He suffered He threatened not," "If I have spoken evil bear witness of the evil but if well why smitest thou me?" So humble was He that Nietzsche spurned his ideal as belittling to the human family; and yet who ever made the claims which Jesus made? He asserts that His is the right to modify the fundamental moral law spoken by God on Sinai; He is to judge the world living and dead; He is absolutely without sin, and has authority to forgive it. Claims such as these are not consonant with humility if they are false, nor has the explanation of insanity any possible ground. The old alternative of the middle ages is absolutely valid: *Utrum Deus an non bonus,* He is either God or not good. If He be the most perfect model of humanity and if He made these claims to supreme divine power there is but one possible solution to the dilemma; He is God. Christ's character stands out in the pages of the Gospels not only because of its strange contradictions but

because of its inherent qualities. There is a charm and grace about Him which draws men to Him, His tenderness and strength were a new experience in His day as in all days. The quiet dignity with which He withstood His enemies or faced the charges of the Jews before Pilate has always been a wonder. Artists have loved to picture it, and in the "Christ before Pilate" of Munkacsy and the "Christ Descending the Steps of the Prætorium" of Doré the artists have caught the wonderful power that this dignity gives. He comes down, in Doré's picture, with clear eyes, fearlessly facing the most terrible death which the world knew, and so showing not only a unique dignity but a courage which has had many followers but has never been surpassed. The courage of our Lord must strike one over and over again; the actual physical courage in the face of hostility, the moral courage in the face of temptations, and the courage of a firmly fixed purpose which led Him on in spite of the opposition of the Jews and the blindness of the disciples until He stood before Pilate the object of bitterest hatred which men could vent on a fellow. These are but some of the outstanding but less commonly emphasized traits of that ideal character which draws men to Him in admiration and then in love.

The Gospels set the Lord Jesus before us not only as unique in character but as a teacher the like of whom had never been seen. He spoke with an authority which no teacher of His day

ever had: "Never man spake like this man" they said. His method has no equal, and modern teachers can find no example of how to teach to compare to His. The striking fact about this teaching of the Lord is that it centers in Himself. Over and over again He draws men to Himself as the revealer and teacher; or by something which He does. This is particularly true of that record of Him which St. John gave us so that "men might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and believing might have life in His name." But it is not limited to the Fourth Gospel and there are no passages in it that are more outstanding in this particular than those in the Sermon on the Mount in St. Matthew and others in both St. Mark and St. Luke. And yet as He says He speaks what He has been commissioned to speak and what He has learned of the Father. The same motive seems to lie behind Him which later lay behind the Apostles when they said: "We cannot but speak what we have heard and seen," or as St. John phrases it in his epistle: "What we have heard and seen that declare we unto you." The teaching of Jesus Christ is His and is about Himself, but it is only what His Father has given Him to preach.

Of course the Gospels, equally with the Epistles, though not more strongly even if more extensively, set our Lord before us as absolutely human, while also truly divine. There is no single element of humanity which is missing in

Him save that which is due to sin in Himself. And it is striking that the Gospel which most emphasizes the Deity is the most definite in evidence of his true humanity. When I say this of course I do not forget that the Person of Jesus Christ was not human but divine. He who is set forth as truly man is not a human person.

It must be familiar to you that when our Lord led the apostles to confess that He was "the Christ the Son of the Living God" He accepted without the slightest contradiction their confession as true. He never let them lose sight of His being somewhat more than a great teacher or as possessed of a peculiar authority that was derived from God and yet was His very own. It is true that these claims are more clearly unfolded in St. John; his assertions there are more strong and striking; yet they are not only in the Fourth Gospel. This is so true that if the extremest critics of the last century had been able to prove their contentions—which they were not able to do—and if the Fourth Gospel had been proved to be a late second century writing, our loss would have been the detail of the evidence it gives to His Person and the beautiful form of His teaching. The Fact of His Deity and the definiteness of His claims to be divine would still have remained.

One further note demands our attention before I sum up, and that is the phrases by which the evangelists speak of Him rather than the ac-

counts they record of His actual words and deeds. We have already seen how the opening of St. Mark speaks of Him as "Son of God," "The Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God." St. Luke builds up the genealogy to God by way of Adam asserting a divine origin in a different sense and he frequently refers to our Lord as the Lord, a phrase that may have no more significance than "Master" but is one that certainly carries with it the Old Testament association with the divine name. In St. Matthew's prologue itself we have evidence of no more than the fact that Jesus is the Christ, yet he goes on at once to speak of the virgin birth of Him who is God with us. It is in the Prologue of St. John, however, that we find the clearest statement of the person of Jesus Christ who is there called the Logos, "Who was with God and was God" and yet "tabernacled with" men, who have beheld "His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth." And to these very formal phrases we must add the fact that the men who wrote these Gospels wrote to prove, as St. John said, that Jesus of Nazareth was God's Son and that men might live by faith in Him.

## III

The Church has striven all through her history to make plain what this basic fact of Christian belief really is. The earlier centuries as

they faced the problems of the Person of Jesus Christ in the light of the knowledge and philosophy of that day, defined her belief in the Nicene Creed and summed it up in the Decrees of the Council of Ephesus, asserting that He is truly God, not the chief of creatures; perfect man, with all that makes true manhood; one person, not two, i. e. God Incarnate not God abiding for a while, as some heathen deities were said to have done, in a human person; and that this union between God and man in the Person of the Son of God was such that each nature was perfect, complete in itself, not mixed together so that we had some strange composite, partly divine and partly human.

But men are not content with the philosophy of the fifth century. The new discoveries of the more recent past have led men to new explanations of the universe and to question again who and what is Jesus Christ. Dr. Tennant in the *Constructive Quarterly* for 1921 has summed this up in two most interesting articles although his conclusions do not swing with the Nicene Creed. Was Jesus Christ merely a great religious genius, one who had an insight into religion and a skill in interpreting it as Beethoven and Wagner had in Music, or Titian and Rembrandt in Art? So some would say, but this does not explain the story of eighteen centuries of Christian faith nor can it justify His own claims. Was He one in whom preëminently there was a divine indwelling, a saint beyond

all who ever lived, one who is the very acme of the divine immanence which is seen in all nature and so in man? If so how is it that the traits of saintliness of all types, the sense of sin and of humility, are so lacking in Him who by contrast claims to be divine and sinless? Neither of these nor the old Arian demigod will solve the mystery. Jesus Christ makes claims and the Gospels tell us what they were, the apostles proclaimed Him as being what those claims asserted, Very God of Very God, yet truly man. No other explanation will satisfy the facts nor give sufficient reason for the story of the past nineteen centuries of Christian history, but that Christ as Bishop Gore says "Is of one substance with the Father, that He was completely human, that His humanity had no independent center of personality in itself, but that in the unity of One Divine Person both Godhead and manhood remain two natures in one person."

In this belief the Christian stands before the Altar at the Divine Mysteries and proclaims:

"I believe . . . in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God; begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God; begotten not made; Being of one Substance with the Father, By whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man."

## CHAPTER III

### THE CREEDS

No science can make progress without a body of definitions, or terms, on whose meaning men are agreed. No habit of life can become the common property of men unless there is similar agreements to the principles on which it is based and the characteristics which mark it. Christianity is a science in the broadest sense; and it too must have its agreed statements or principles, its terms and definitions which are the common property of its members, and on which the life is upbuilt. Further, Christianity is a habit of life, a science which springs out of a group of facts, which its adherents believe to be facts and concerning which they must profess their faith before they can be accepted as members of the Christian Church. All these things point to Creeds, and we find in the entire course of Christian history, that the Church has had such a definition, such a statement of principle, such a body of facts, of which the Creed gives a brief and simple summary. In this chapter we have to question what the Creeds are, and the right of the Church to require them, and the history of their development.

## I

Christianity, Catholic Christianity at least, is founded upon a body of facts, not any theory of theology nor definitions of belief. There are certain events which happened or are to happen, there are certain Persons Who lived or live; and upon the truth of the existence of these Persons and events the Christian Faith and Life is built up. The Creeds are the simple statements as to who and what these are. We might call them prior definitions which call for belief and for which sufficient evidence is supplied, rather than axioms which are self evidently true. The axioms of mathematics are assumed by thinking men to be true beyond contradiction and to be evident to all intelligent persons. There are no similar statements in Christianity. There is nothing which is self-evidently true. The Christian Faith, because it is faith not knowledge, presupposes the possibility that it may not be true. There can be no faith without the possibility of doubt. But the foundation facts of Christian belief are buttressed so strongly, we believe, by evidence, that the thinking man is bound to accept them; while he who runs may read their truth. These foundation facts, as stated in the formularies, are the Creeds: Statements, in other words, of the events and Persons on the basis of which the Christian lives his life.

## II

Has the Church a right to require that men must accept the Creed before they can enter the Church? Is creedal requirement a survival of a time of obscurantism, or is it justified? Assume for the moment that this is done; leave aside for the present the evidential question as to whether these facts are true or false; What is the justification of the demand that a man must believe them if he be a Christian?

In the first place the Church does no more than what human societies and governments do. No man can enter certain fraternal organizations unless he be a believer in God. I well remember how a certain man, standing in a group, and outspoken in his denial of the existence of God, was silenced by the quiet statement by one of the men present that he would have to report him to the authorities of the organization. He knew that he could not continue his membership without at least a profession of belief in God. No one questions the right of a voluntary human society to make such a demand. An alien, born under a foreign flag, brought up under foreign conceptions of government, wishes to become a citizen of the United States. In theory at least he has to subscribe to the American conception of government and accept, in terms, the laws and regulations of this Nation before he can secure his papers of citizenship. As a mere voluntary human society the Christian Church has an

equal right to require that a man, before he can be admitted into her membership, shall accept as true those fundamental facts upon which she is upbuilt.

More than that, the Christian Church believes that she is the guardian of a divine revelation. The truths upon which she is built are parts of a sacred deposit, and she has a responsibility for this that it may be passed on from generation to generation unimpaired and well secured. To make this sure she has again a right to demand before men are admitted into her number that they shall accept these things as true and agree to hold them firmly so long as they are within her company. This Faith "once for all delivered to the saints," as St. Jude describes it, is a sacred trust, and the Apostle's exhortation to St. Timothy to "Hold it fast" and to "keep that which is committed to thy trust" never loses its force. Therefore it is that the Church requires that men should accept and believe the Creeds.

There is a third ground which justifies the Church's demand. Christianity is not merely a form of sound words; nor a body of doctrine. The early term which was used to describe it was "The Way." We shall see in a later chapter what this means in detail, for the present we must be contented with the fact that Christianity involves a definite form of life and that this life depends upon the faith which men hold. We are coming more and more to recognise that there is a vital connection between life and belief.

Thinking men have always seen this, but the antagonist to definite Christian belief quite frequently fails to admit it as true; but the truth is not affected by this denial or neglect. The relation between belief and conduct is shown on the one side in this sentence from Alexander Bain: "No belief is real unless it guides our action," and on the other side by the parallel phrase of Emerson: "A man's action is but the picture book of his creed." When our faith grows dim our conduct becomes uncertain, and if it is not always true it is often true that loss of faith is due to, or is followed by, a loss of moral fibre and a lowering of the ideal of conduct. So again, in order to keep her people to the Christian ideal of living the Christian Church demands, and is right in demanding, that they shall accept as true her belief; and asks when they come to be baptized: "Dost thou believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith as contained in the Apostles' Creed?"

## III

We must be very clear in our own minds as to what the Church claims for the Creed, for this determines to no small degree both the use of it and its binding force upon us. Her first claim is that the Twelve Articles of the Creed, in the form in which she gives them to us, state facts which are absolutely true. We shall return shortly to the problem which this statement in-

volves. Facts are matters of evidence, and differ from opinion in that they are not changeable. The meaning of the terms in which a fact is defined may vary; men's understanding of the significance of the fact is by no means the same for all generations nor for all the men of the same generation. The facts are bound to be interpreted. To this too we shall have to return later; but for the present we are only interested in the statement that the Church claims that the Creed states facts which have been, or are, or will be, and states belief in Persons who have done, or do, or will do these things; and these facts and the actions of these Persons are subject to the laws of evidence.

Further the Church claims, not only that conduct in a general sense depends upon faith, but that each of the twelve articles of her Faith affects in its own special way the life men live. Let me illustrate. The Creed begins with a statement of belief in God; that belief is the background of life. The wide acceptance by many people today of certain religious vagaries is in no small degree due to the fact that the Christian Church has failed to teach the value in life of the belief in God; and so men, having lost sight of it in the Church, have sought for it elsewhere. Man is a 'praying animal' and if he does not believe in God he cannot pray, but since he feels the need of prayer he must have a belief in God of some sort. If time allowed we might illustrate the conduct value of belief in Jesus

Christ, in His death and resurrection and ascension and in His present session in Heaven. Each article means something in life, and none can be left out without real loss. Men go forth to win the world to Christ because they feel confident that the belief in Him is essential to a right living on the best lines and they want every one to have the experience of that faith and to live the life it demands. And as an essential to such a life they teach men to believe the Articles of the Creed. This moral value and practical use of the Creed is another sufficient reason for the Church's demanding belief in it.

The Creed has a further use. It serves as a corrective against error as well as a guardian of life. The History of the Creeds will show this, and it is particularly evident in the story of the Nicene Creed. Let me recall the chief facts that lie behind that statement of the Faith. In 322 Arius, a Priest of Alexandria, began to teach that our Lord was less than God the Father; the greatest of all creatures, but still a creature. He made Him semi-divine, a sort of demi-god. To meet the serious situation which resulted from the widespread acceptance of Arius's teaching, the Emperor Constantine called the leaders of the Church in Council at Nicea, in 325, in order that this issue might be settled. The decree of the Council met the problem and in the progress of the Church's life has proved to be correct. Jesus Christ was of "one substance with the Father." The Greek term chosen to de-

fine this relationship, homoousia, had a bad association from the last century but it alone met the issue. It would seem as if Constantine had succeeded in quieting the Church's unrest. But it was not long before the controversy broke out again even more bitterly and for nearly fifty years the Church was split into groups and parties constantly changing and shifting in an effort to find some solution of the question; What is the relation between Jesus Christ and the Father? Who is He? During this half century, parallel with this controversy, and in fact growing out of it, there arose three other problems: Shall the Kingdom of Jesus Christ be eternal? Is He, if divine, truly human; or does the deity take the place of His soul? Is the Holy Spirit a divine Person? The answer to all these questions was finally found in the so-called Constantinopolitan Creed which was accepted at the time of the second Council, that of Constantinople in 381, as a satisfactory definition of the Faith, though the Council itself did not take any action adopting the creed. The older definition of the Council of Nicea came into its own and the Church as a whole finally accepted it as a true description and statement of the relation of the Son to the Father. This story of the Creed of Nicea is an example which can be repeated in the story of the Apostle's Creed: in the way the phraseology of the Creed was expanded to correct false beliefs in the Church.

But we must remember that the question be-

hind the development of the Creeds—and they have developed in form, have been expanded—is not one of what should be believed but of what has been believed. The 318 fathers who gathered at Nicea, scarred by their sufferings under the persecution of Diocletian, did not ask What ought we to say? What do we believe? but on the contrary, What is the Faith which has been entrusted to us by our fathers? And the difficulty which made them hesitate so long before admitting the only word which would solve the problem—homoousia—was that this very word had, as I have just said, a bad association and had not been used in the New Testament, as descriptive of our Lord. The Creeds are guide posts, which in the morass of human vagaries mark the way that keeps the truth of the Christian Faith clear and sure; that state, in other words, the facts that underlie that Faith in terms which are unquestionably true.

These several values of the Creed are shown in the Church's use of it. Before she admits any one into the number of the disciples she requires that they shall accept the Faith "once for all delivered." She guards the Truth from false believers. She requires that the man who is to be admitted to Holy Orders and so to become an official and authoritative mouthpiece and witness to the Faith, shall profess that same Faith in its fullest form. No false teacher can find his way into the company of the Church's guides unless he comes in under false pretenses, or loses

his Faith in later years when again the Church calls him to task upon the basis of that same Creed. Finally the Church uses the Creed in her regular worship as a reminder of the Faith in which men have been baptized and as a constant inspiration to a holy life. The Creeds are no barren forms of words as used in the Church's life. They are quick with life and sharp to guide the souls of men.

## IV

We saw a little while ago that the Creeds state facts which men are bound to interpret, and it is this aspect of the problem which arouses difficulty. If these things are facts in what sense are they true? How can we, if we must, accept them? I must consider very briefly a few of the particular problems which arise. The first will be, of necessity, the meaning of the First Article of the Creed: "I believe in God the Father Almighty Maker of Heaven and earth"; or as it reads in the Nicene Creed: "I believe in one God the Father Almighty Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible." What does this require of us?

The word "Maker" in its original form both in Greek and Latin carries the sense of Creator as well as maker. How far is this true: or in what sense is it true in the light of modern beliefs about nature? There is no doubt that a century

ago it was interpreted in the light of the philosophy and science of the day. All interpretation of facts in reality impinge upon philosophy, and our own interpretation of facts is largely influenced by our theory of things, i. e. our philosophy. The old "fiat" theory of creation, which said that it was by immediate acts of God in six days of twenty four hours each, is untenable in the light of modern science and philosophy. The theory of Evolution, in whatever form or modification, if it rules God out of the processes by which the world is being developed, is not tenable by the Christian. It is contrary to the Christian Faith which defines God as the Creator and Maker of all things seen and unseen. But there is no necessary conflict between a reasonable belief in Evolution and the Creed's statement of the fact that God is the Creator. As I showed in the last Chapter the laws of nature are the laws of His working and no doctrine of creation which recognizes that He lies behind the processes contradicts the Creed. Rather it is true, as Bishop Henson has pointed out, that the very assumption of modern science of a purpose in nature requires a personal God behind it as author of that purpose.

Modern teaching raises three questions about the statements concerning our Lord, in addition to the elemental one: Is He truly God and how. These three questions are the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and the Ascension. As to the first, the Virgin Birth, we have the two questions

first of evidence and then of credibility. The New Testament evidence to the Virgin Birth of our Lord, i. e. that He was "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," thus having no human father, has been stated and restated many times. The evidence falls into four lines. The oldest is St. Paul's statement in Galatians that "He was born of a woman," which by itself would seem inconclusive. The second is the account of his birth as given by St. Luke in the first two chapters. It is very interesting to note that in the last quarter century the historical trustworthiness of St. Luke has become more and more certain. Archaeology and history have proved over and again that he was a careful, accurate writer, who knew what he meant to say and spoke with certainty. He tells us that he had searched out carefully from eyewitnesses and hearers of the Lord's life and teaching what was true so that his friend might have assurance of what he was taught orally. St. Luke's evidence to our Lord's birth is full and complete. He relates the announcement and the fulfilment. He tells us that the Virgin was told that the "Holy thing which was to be born of her was the Son of God," and he relates in detail the story of that holy birth. There can be no question that St. Luke meant us to understand that Jesus of Nazareth was miraculously born without human father by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary being His mother. The third strand is the witness of St. Matthew's Gos-

pel; equally distinct and equally independent, giving the story from an entirely different point of view, but with exactly the same implication. One recalls Ramsay's theory that St. Luke's account came to him through "them of Herod's household," who had learned it in turn from the Blessed Virgin herself; while St. Matthew's version is St. Joseph's account, explaining the mysterious event, given to clear the reputation of his wife from the calumny of the Jews. The two accounts, whatever be their origin, are quite clearly utterly independent of each other and yet are in absolute agreement. In no particular do they contradict each other, but on the contrary they supplement one the other so that out of them we get a fuller story of those early days. The fourth witness is St. John, who in his preface writes of the birth of our Lord, the eternal Logos, in terms which well imply that it was not by human generation. "He was born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The evidence to the Virgin Birth of our Lord is not meagre, but men hesitate to accept it because they feel that the thing itself is incredible. It is an "impinging of God" upon human life which has no parallel and, beyond all miracles save the Resurrection itself, is impossible. Bishop Gore, in his recent book *Belief in God*, says of the credibility of the Virgin Birth "I must confess that I cannot imagine how the birth of the really sinless man could have occurred without some physical mir-

acle, so sure do I feel that sin has somehow affected the physical stock; and I once drew from Huxley the admission that if he believed—what he did not—that Jesus was strictly sinless he would suppose that that involved as well a physical as a moral miracle." The tendency has been to make our Lord's Deity depend upon the Virgin Birth and there are many who could not put it in any other way than this: They believe the Virgin Birth on evidence and therefore believe that Jesus is God. The order of the Creed suggests another approach. We confess our belief in Him as God and then we go on to state that He whom we believe to be God was born into the human family in a miraculous manner. There are some of us who would put it in the other way and say not that we believe He is God because He was born of a Virgin, but we believe He is God, and because of this fact that He is God, we have no doubt of the Virgin Birth.

The arguments for our Lord's Resurrection are familiar to most people, and they are the strongest group in the whole body of evidence to the Christian Faith. They, too, are many. We have the evidence of the New Testament, the Gospel narratives and the Epistles which assert in terms which cannot be denied the belief of the Apostles in the resurrection of their Lord. They saw Him alive after His Passion, more than three hundred persons were alive twenty five years later, who actually saw Him on one spe-

cial occasion. There is the evidence of the long history of the Christian Church. Men have believed that Jesus was dead and is alive again and on the basis of that belief have both lived and died, often the death of a martyr. And the Church is based upon the fact of the Resurrection, for, if Jesus did not rise again then—it is true for all ages—our preaching as the Apostle said is vain. We build up our belief upon a falsehood, if He did not rise. Two other present day facts are of equal validity in evidence to this truth. The whole of modern civilization dates the passing years from the time of His birth. Every calendar, every newspaper and the documents of many centuries have carried on their face the year of Christ. The sacred day of the week through the influence of a religion which arose from Judaism was changed from the seventh day to the first and, save for the Jews and even in part by them, the witness is born to the first day of the week as the memorial of some event of transcendent importance which marked that day. These lines, and there are others in addition, all concentrate upon the truth as the Creed states it that on the third day, which is the first day of the week, the Lord Jesus rose again from the dead. But the problem of the Resurrection is not merely a problem of evidence. Like that of the Virgin Birth it is a problem of reality. Did Jesus come back into his earthly body changed or not, or did He in some way make His followers believe that He was alive in

the world beyond? Is the Resurrection a fact or a poetical description of immortality? There can be no question what those who had the best chances to know believed. The New Testament evidence is undoubtedly for an actual restoration of the soul to its bodily tenement and the presence of the Master not in spirit form, ghost like, but as actually alive and clothed in flesh. No attempt to explain it will satisfy the evidence save the statement of the Creed.

The Article which states the Ascension involves a problem of interpretation which is less difficult of solution when once we accept the Resurrection. Granted that He rose again clothed in the body of His glory in which He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs, and it is not hard to believe that He is still alive, clothed in that body. But what of the expression "the right hand of God the Father Almighty?" We saw that God is spirit and as such has neither parts nor passions. In what sense can we use the term "right hand of God?" Only one is possible. It must mean the place of honor and glory corresponding to that which the right hand is on earth. Christ is exalted far above all heavens. He is lifted up and given a position before which all created things bow in reverent adoration. The expression describes, in terms of man's speech, the exaltation of the Ascended Lord and points out His rule over the earth.

## II

One further point demands attention in this connection, the development of the Creed. I shall confine myself almost entirely to the story of the western form, the Apostles' Creed as we call it. Our New Testament evidence shows but little of the very beginning of the progress. The Christian converts, beginning with belief in God, which they shared or inherited from the Jews, had to believe also in Jesus Christ as His Son and in the Holy Spirit. The stories of the baptism of the eunuch and of the twelve men whom St. Paul confirmed in Ephesus tell us this. As a matter of fact the simplest Creed form which has come down to us is quoted by St. Cyril of Jerusalem and reads: "I believe in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Ghost and in One Baptism of repentance." This form, while quoted in the fourth century, undoubtedly represents a very early stage and warrants us in thinking that the original form of Christian belief was little more than a statement of belief in Christ's revelation of God as contained in the baptismal formula. Our evidence prior to the third century is very scanty and we can build but tentatively. These facts seem to emerge: The Creed itself became a sort of password or test given at the time of baptism and known only to believers who were thus able to identify themselves as Christians. There was a form generally common, but by no means identical, whose

variations were not simply local, but rather regional. As we study the early forms of the Creed which are quoted in Christian literature we find that they trace back to two centers, to Rome in the West, and to Antioch in the East. How close the relationship between these two centers may prove to be is a problem for future study but the evidence would seem to show if not a common source at least a common and parallel development from the Baptismal formula. It was during this period of development of the simply Baptismal Creed that the Arian controversy arose which brought about the fuller and more elaborate Creed forms of the fourth century which we associate with the Nicene Creed. But we are restricting ourselves to the Apostles' Creed and that in the West, and now come to the period between the fourth century when it was beginning to assume its fuller form and the middle of the eighth century when its present form was beginning to become familiar in the West.

First of all it may not be amiss to recall the reason for its name. Rufinus writing in the fifth century tells us the tradition of his own time that the Twelve Apostles, before they separated to preach the Gospel in the world, agreed to write a Creed and each one supplied a single article, and the twelve were put together in the form which Rufinus gives of the Apostles' Creed. The story is absurd upon the face of it and there is not the slightest evidence that any such event

ever took place. But perhaps there is underneath a principle which is true, viz., that the Apostles' teaching was all the same and that there was some common body of facts which they all agreed were essential. To call this "the deposit" of which St. Paul writes would be to overstress a possibility. Dr. Briggs had evidently some such thought in mind when he explained the Greek name of the Creed, *Symbolon*, as derived from the verb to gather together and thought of the Creed, or *Symbolon*, as the summary of the Apostles' teaching. Probably the safer explanation is that the form of the Creed which became most familiar in the West was the development which spread from Rome and was known as the Creed of the Apostolic See, the only See west of the Adriatic established by Apostles; and thence the formulary came to be called popularly the Apostles' Creed.

But what happened between the days of Rufinus and the days of Pirminius in 750, for the Creed which Pirminius quotes is the one we all know and the Creed of Rufinus is the Creed which Marcellus of Ancrya wrote in 340 to prove his orthodoxy while he was in Rome. It runs as follows: "I believe in God Father Almighty, And in Jesus His only Son our Lord; Who was born of the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary: Was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried: Rose again from the dead the third day: Ascended into heaven; Sitteth on the right hand of the Father: From thence He shall come

to judge the quick and the dead: And in the Holy Ghost: The Holy Church: The Forgiveness of Sins: The Resurrection of the Flesh."

Most of the phrases which Pirminius gives us and Marcellus omits were, until recently, explained as expressions added in Southern Gaul to meet special Gallic heresies and have been called purely western in origin. There is a very different explanation. In what we commonly call the Balkan peninsula in Roman imperial days there was the province of Pannonia. It was settled by Romans from the neighborhood of Rome itself, and was always closely related to the mother city. The probabilities are that its inhabitants were converted to Christianity by missionaries from Rome, and the type of Christianity was distinctly western and not eastern. Through that territory during the later days of the Empire ran the great highroad between Constantinople and Rome, by which the courriers travelled and over which the caravans of the traders journeyed back and forth by way of Aquileia. Where the merchant went the Christian missionary followed, and into Pannonia and the regions round about there came a constant stream of eastern influences; and with these eastern influences there came naturally eastern phraseology and eastern beliefs. Not so long ago a sermon of Niceta Bishop of Remesiana was brought to the notice of scholars in which he quotes a creed. This sermon is to be

dated at about 375 and in the Creed it quotes we find almost all the phrases which are used by Pirminius and used to be quoted as western in origin. They are much more probably eastern in origin, yet at the end of the fourth century are thus found imbedded in a creed of western origin.

Before we trace the progress of these phrases in the West we must notice what they are. Some are of no historic value, just a word here and there to clear up or expand a phrase, such as the addition of "conceived" and "suffered" and "dead" and the expansion of the expression "the Father" in the statement of the ascension, to our familiar "God the Father Almighty." These are insignificant; but there is another group which have a definite doctrinal value, concerning which the Sermon of Niceta tells us much. I can mention but four. In the opening article the phrase "Maker of heaven and earth" does not appear in the early Roman Creed and it is rarely found in the West save in restricted territory until the eighth century. It is an expression which St. Irenaeus used against the Gnostices. But Niceta quotes it in the Creed and it reappears in Africa during the fifth and sixth centuries. The Gallican service books of the seventh century include it and finally we find it in the fuller form in the Creed of Pirminius. The story of the word "catholic" as applied to the Church is very similar. The history of this word is too well known to be repeated here, yet there is one vari-

ation in its use which we must not forget. Originally it meant universal, but by the end of the second or the beginning of the third century it had come to mean also orthodox as opposed to heretical; and this is the meaning of the word in the West from the time of St. Augustine, so that from the fifth century onward it has a double sense of exclusive, i. e. orthodox, and inclusive, i. e. universal, comprehending all in one. Niceta gives us evidence of the wider use in the Creed. The expression "descended into Hell" shows not only in Niceta in 375 but also in the *Fides Hieronymii* dated two years later and within fifteen years in the Creed of Aquileia, whence we can trace its presence in the creeds of Gaul and Spain and on into Ireland. The fourth of these special eastern phrases which were formerly attributed to western origin is the "Communion of Saints." Both Niceta and Jerome have it and Niceta discusses at length its meaning, giving it that special significance which has marked it ever since in the Western Christendom as the interpretation of the previous expression the Holy Catholic Church, for says he: "What is the Church but the congregation of all saints? For from the beginning of the world Patriarchs as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs and all just men who have been, are or shall be, are one Church because sanctified by one faith and life, marked by one spirit, they constitute one body of which Christ is declared to be its head. . . . Believe

therefore that in this one Church you will attain to the Communion of Saints."

The evidence for these four phrases runs with marked similarity. They all appear in the commentary of Niceta, some in the Creed of Jerome, they next appear in Aquileia, on the highway to, but not in Rome. From Aquileia they passed across northern Italy into the further West, appearing first in Spain and later in southern Gaul. From Gaul they seem to have reached Britain and they appear in the Bangor Antiphonal. The story is not yet told, for these same phrases which in the latter part of the fourth century first appeared in the Creed in the near East and thence passed during the next three centuries by way of Spain and Gaul to Ireland reappear in the northern parts of Italy and from Bobbio seem to have been carried to Rome where they were incorporated into the Creed of the Holy City and from the middle of the eighth century become a part of the Creed of the Apostolic See.

What follows is surmise, but it is more than possibly true. The last half of the eighth century was a time of great importance to the Western Church. It was to end with the crowning of Charles the Great in Rome on Christmas Day 800 and through his influence was to come the bringing into prominence of Roman customs and rites and ceremonies, accompanied as might be expected with the substitution of these services for the older local form indigenous to the several

churches. It was thus to see the great breakdown of Gallican rites. It is not too much to imagine that the old Roman Creed, carried by earlier missionaries into the near East and there expanded under the influence of the eastern creeds and eastern teaching into its fuller form, was carried back westward across the great highways of empire and Church until finally, after four centuries of wandering, it reached its ancient home where in time it became the common form and whence under the influence of Charlemagne it was carried throughout the Western Church and became the common baptismal creed and the approved form for the Declaration of Faith in the Daily Offices.

There was a custom in England which suggests how greatly the Church values the Creed, that formal statement of the faith upon which she is built. Before the troops in older days went forth to war, they were gathered in St. Paul's Cathedral in London and when the time came for them to say the Creed the cavalrymen drew their swords and holding them aloft professed their belief in God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in whom they trusted and whose blessing was invoked upon their campaign. The Creed was that outward form of Faith for which in older days men were ready to die, and in which today they live and serve and, when the call comes in their turn give up their lives here to enter life hereafter.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE IDEA OF THE CHURCH

No one can read modern religious books or even papers nor listen to serious conversation without having to face the problem: What is the Kingdom of God: What is the Church; What is the relation between them; are they the same; If not where and what is the Church?

#### I

The careful reader of the New Testament at once finds a distinction there in the use of the two terms “Kingdom of Heaven” as St. Matthew puts it, or “Kingdom of God” as the rest of the writers, and “the Church.” The Gospels speak of the Kingdom; the Epistles of the Church. That is the general statement; we must now examine the exact usage. Of the two Greek words used that translated “Kingdom” is found in the New Testament 140 times of which 111 are in the Gospels and of these all but four are in the Synoptic Gospels, leaving only 29 instances of its use in the Acts (8) and the Epistles (21). The word translated “Church” is used 111 times in the New Testament of which only three are in

the Gospels, all in St. Matthew, with 23 instances in Acts and 85 in the remaining writings. It would seem therefore that Christ's word is "Kingdom" and the Apostles' word "Church"; and in this fact lies the whole significance of the problem and also its solution.

Let us examine first what our Lord Himself says about the Kingdom. Neither the word nor the idea was new. When He began to use it the entire Jewish nation had been stirred by the proclamation of St. John Baptist that the Kingdom was at hand; and the Baptist in turn had simply taken over an Old Testament term about which there had grown a body of associations and ideas. The Old Testament prophets thought of Israel as God's people. He was their King, and the Law under which they lived came from Him. They were under His rule and through "Moses and the Prophets" they had been taught what God wanted them to do in the three great spheres of life. He had given them a law to regulate the social relationships of life; a law not of principles but of precepts, and it touched virtually every aspect of their common fellowship with one another. He had gone further and had given them minute directions as to the way in which they were to approach Him in worship; the minutiae of ritual were parts of the Law of God. More fundamental as we see it, but less so as they understood it, the Law of God finally reached into their own personal life and gave them rules of conduct and of individual morals.

But on whatever side it touched life it came from God: "Hear O Israel," "Thus saith the LORD thy God," was the constant refrain. The Children of Israel were a people under God's rule, owing allegiance to Him; and their kings, when they had them,—during less than a third of their history—were only the human agents by whom God ruled the nation. This idea of the Kingdom of God, as do all ideas in the Old Testament, gradually unfolded and developed until we find in Daniel the goal of a perfect Kingdom yet to come, "which the God of Heaven shall set up," "one that shall never be destroyed"; "a Kingdom which is to be an everlasting kingdom which all peoples and nations and languages shall enter and there serve its king."

This great ideal was never a finished ideal in Old Testament days, even under the latest datings of extreme modern criticism. There was always set before Judah the expectation of a "good time coming" which was generally phrased by the expression "The day of the Lord." This great future event was not wholly one of glory and triumph, the idea of a day of doom and of punishment was constantly intermingled with the note of triumph and victory. But the latter prevailed as the great encouragement of the Jews of later generations. And they needed the encouragement. The bitter persecutions under Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century B. C. and the iron heel of the Romans which marked the closing years of the first, produced the nat-

ural depression and on the other hand made the people long for the coming of the time when the people of the LORD should once more be free and independent of foreign domination and again enter life in a great Kingdom whose glory and grandeur should far outshine the golden days of the past.

We must not forget that for Israel the Golden Age was in the future. They looked forward not backward, save as the memory of past prosperity gave more brilliant color to the future which was to surpass it. And it was out of this longing and, in a way, to deepen and intensify it and to encourage the Jew to a more and more living hope, that the apocalypses came to be written. Their authors saw the need of consolation and encouragement; they felt that it could best be given in the form of pictures of the future put into the mouths of men of days long gone who were honored in popular tradition. The thought of any dishonesty in the method seems to have had no place or to have been justified by the necessity. Naturally these apocalypses are most varied in form and the pictures they paint are by no means always alike; but underneath them all lies the common idea of a new era which would be ushered in by an act of God, an era which would be a "holy happy order of things" in which "peace and plenty and prosperity" would be the portion of the faithful. This idea, as was to be expected, was associated with the picture of the great leader under whom this Kingdom of God

would be inaugurated. There is almost as much difference here as in the pictures of the Kingdom itself. To some writers he was merely a Son of David, that is one of his family who should deliver his people and establish the Kingdom. In other apocalypses he is less definitely described, but is spoken of as a Son of Man, a human leader of great power and authority who would play his part in the deliverance of his people and then disappear. Occasionally the King is described as more than man, divine in character and person and so he was called Son of God.

It is hard to judge just how widespread or universal any of these views were; we cannot be sure even of the extent to which the belief in the Kingdom of heaven was accepted. The Gospels however tell us that "all men mused in their hearts of John whether he were the Christ or not," this would imply a very wide spread belief in the coming of the Kingdom and it was no doubt intensified by the Baptist himself as he proclaimed, herald like, in the wilderness of Judea and up the Jordan valley: "Prepare ye; the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." And it was to a people expectant and with their hopes fired by the ministry of the Baptist that Jesus Christ entered, announcing as He did that the time of expectation was over, the Kingdom actually come.

We must never forget when we think of Jesus Christ taking up something which the prophets had already foretold that He was not content

simply to re-echo their message. His task was always to give it that fullness of interpretation, that deeper meaning, which would mean the fruition of their idea into the perfection of His own message. This was particularly true of the unfolding of the Kingdom. His ideal was quite different from theirs, and His task was not merely to correct but to unfold and to build what He came to establish on their foundations. We must therefore try to see what were the characteristics of the Kingdom as He gave them.

At the outset we have the story of the conversation with Nicodemus. This reverent and earnest ruler of the Jews was attracted by our Lord's wonderful power and came to Him secretly to enquire about the Kingdom. Christ's answer was that Nicodemus needed not knowledge but life, and that the life, without which he could not hope to see the Kingdom, could only come to him by the process of a new birth. This new life was to be spiritual, a moral condition, based upon Divine revelation; but it was, and this was always the Master's method, a life into which men enter by an outward act. The birth was to be accomplished not in the natural processes of human generation, that could not be repeated; but by water and the Spirit; and as the natural fleshly birth resulted in fleshly life, so this spiritual birth, evidenced by water, was to result in spiritual life. But Nicodemus did not understand Him.

This spiritual character of the Kingdom, so different from the popular Jewish belief, underlies all our Lord's teaching in the parables and more especially in the Sermon on the Mount. The old code of precepts was to give way to a new body of principles; men were to be men of personal character in and of themselves, and as such they were to fulfil their lives among men and live in their social relationships. New moral, social, and religious principles were set forth by our Lord with increasing clearness as He made men realize that the Kingdom of Heaven was not a mere earthly monarchy. But He did not let them think, as the old apocalyptic writers did, that it was wholly future. There was a future, the whole coming age was its future; but it began then. He formed it. There is no passage which puts this more clearly than His reply to the Pharisees when they asked Him when it would come. "It cometh not by observation," He said, "it is among you." It is already here. But though present it was not yet complete in its development; He had to do many things before He could send them forth to proclaim the good news everywhere.

The Kingdom of God, as Christ preached it, is a great spiritual rule but it is not without its outward rites. What He said to Nicodemus underlay all His teaching; over and against the spiritual, and really as an evidence of the very spiritual forces themselves, He set the outward rites of Baptism and the Holy Communion. He

appointed the Apostles to be the rulers of the Kingdom, and the messengers of its good news; and before His ascension He gave a final command that they should go everywhere and make disciples by the outward sign of Baptism and teach them to live the spiritual life of holiness and love which He had been teaching. If outward expression was required, still more was the inner spirit necessary. The mere accident of human birth meant nothing; the Jew as a child of Abraham had no prerogatives. God could make the very stones such. What counted, as all His miracles wrought on men showed, was faith and humility. To build up this Kingdom, this new rule of God, not over the outer lives but in the deepest recesses of the soul, God's Son came into the world, and as its king He died upon the Cross so that men might be won to accept Him and it.

This central teaching of the Lord was not forgotten by the Apostles and they, not unfrequently as they write, especially St. Paul, remind the Christians of the spiritual character of the Kingdom which the latter calls the 'Kingdom of the Son of God's love.' Under it all there lies the single principle of the Rule of God. Jesus Christ came to do His Father's will, and when He had lived His life He declared that He had fulfilled it. His disciples are under the same regimen. They, as members of His kingdom, must in like manner do His Father's will. Bishop Gore describes the Kingdom of Heaven as a "realm of obedient wills," and we read of it

as a "community in which God's will is fulfilled, a religious fellowship, a theocracy, in which the people who were God's would be living the life God would have them live and in return He would ensure their place in His Kingdom."

I said that "Kingdom" is the Lord's word and "Church" that of the Apostles, but the Master Himself set them the example and, as we saw, the word Church is found in two places in St. Matthew's Gospel. Of these the celebrated and vitally important one is Chapter 16:18. Immediately after St. Peter's confession our Lord replied, "Thou art Peter and upon this Rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." We are only interested in the single sentence "upon this rock I will build my church" and for the present only in the last part of it. The word which is here translated Church is in the Old Testament used as the equivalent for the Hebrew word meaning the Congregation of Israel, not as a people or nation but as the holy people of God. They are ideally the true Israel. Jesus Christ was come into the world, so St. Matthew records in the Sermon on the Mount, to bring to perfection the Law and the Prophets, to complete, round out into its fulness what they had inaugurated. But in the Law and the Prophets there is more than the collection of the precepts of morals and society and religion which as we have seen underlie the idea of the Kingdom. There was also the holy people, a sacred society, Israel. Now our Lord, in

fulfilling the Law and the Prophets, carried out this side of the Old Testament revelation as well as the other. He built up a new Israel, His Congregation, which the Apostle calls a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people," and in speaking of this new Israel Jesus Christ uses the Greek equivalent of the Old Testament word, ecclesia or Church. In the other passage, St. Matthew 18: 17, where the word occurs twice, it refers again to the congregation of the faithful.

But if our Lord uses the expression but seldom there is no doubt of the frequency of the apostolic usage. The word appears in many contexts but almost always with this same central idea of the chosen people. Sometimes it is the Church in a particular locality, as the Church in some one's house, or in some town; once it is the Church of Christ, again it is the 'Church of God which He purchased with His own Blood' (or the Blood of His own Son) and in the Ephesians the Apostle writes with a wider vision and sees the chosen people, scattered over the earth, as one single nation, and uses the term in the most general way.

Behind this use of language lies a great body of fact to which I can but allude. As our Lord stood behind the apostolic company during His life on earth so the Apostles stand behind the chosen people after the descent of the Holy Ghost. Nothing happens without them, and they are the centers of life under every condition.

Archbishop Temple puts this admirably in the volume *Twelve Sermons Preached at the Consecration of Truro Cathedral* quoted by Stone in *The Christian Church*. "The Church takes its origin not in the will of man but in the will of the Lord Jesus Christ. He sent forth His Apostles, the Apostles received their commission from Him. . . . They came first and the members came afterwards." One gets it even more strikingly in Rackham's Introduction to his Commentary on the *Acts*, where he traces the development of the Church as given in *Acts*, and shows how the Apostles were the very center of everything.

The Christian people, this New Israel which Jesus Christ built upon the Rock which St. Peter disclosed, has similar characteristics to the Kingdom which our Lord preached. Like it the Church has its principles of conduct, its ideals of life, its rites and ceremonies, its rulers and guides, and all these in the Church are practically exactly what they are in the Kingdom as preached by the Lord Himself. The thing of the *Acts* and the *Epistles* and the *Revelation*, which men called the Church or the Church in special places, is the same thing which Jesus Christ called the Kingdom of Heaven or of God as recorded in the *Gospels*. But why the change?

One cannot but recall a suggestion of Ramsay's. The Apostles went forth to preach and to establish the Kingdom. So far as the *Acts* and *Epistles* go this work was within the confines

of the Roman Empire. From what we know of Roman imperial government and jealousy of its own prerogatives it is not hard to imagine what might have been the fate of the Christian Church in its infancy if the Roman imperial authorities knew of it as the developing within the empire of a new kingdom whose adherents were bound by ties which were stronger than those of the Empire itself. The persecutions, which came with terrific force two centuries later in their extremest form when the Church was strong enough to bear them, would have swept, humanly speaking, from among men the few evangelists of the middle of the first century and the Gospel message would have died. The elect people, the ecclesia, did not arouse this antagonism and by the time that the Empire woke to the question the danger was virtually past. The Church of the Apostolic age is the same thing as the Kingdom in the days when they were but disciples or had been made apostles but as yet without the endowment of the Spirit which made them changed men. So far as New Testament usage is concerned the two are but different names for the one thing.

Within recent generations men have come to give the Gospel phrase a larger, wider content than they give to the word Church and many are thinking of the Kingdom of God as the great body of people who recognise the rule of God and yet, in the case of many of them, never come within the membership of the people of God or

the Church; and they have built up this idea upon an interpretation in part at least of St. Paul's word in I Corinthians 15:24, "when the Son shall have delivered up the Kingdom to the Father." We must be on our guard against two possible misconceptions; (I) that there is, or can be, beneath the Church as it is seen on earth, desperately rent and divided, torn asunder, an invisible Church which is the real Ecclesia of God. There is no possible New Testament basis for any such conception, and the Lord's parables, as St. Augustine showed very plainly in his controversy with the Donatists, recognise the existence in the Kingdom of both good and bad, who will remain, until the end of the world. (II) And in addition to this mistaken conception there is a second, the idea that the Kingdom is a mere congeries or composite of all the multitudes of people who profess a faith in Jesus Christ without any outward mark or sign. I have already said enough to show that in the New Testament both Church and Kingdom have their necessary outward marks. There is, however, a twilight zone, if I may so call it, into which the light of the Gospel shines, but where it does not fully penetrate; where its influence reaches but does not become supreme. We see it in civilization, in the environment of Christendom today. We get examples of it in the so-called civilizing influences of the Church as seen in heathen lands. There is then a sense in which the Kingdom of God is bigger, bigger on earth, than the Chris-

tian Church in even its broadest sense. And in this interpretation of the term, the Kingdom of God and the Church are not the same; but the Church is the formal medium through which the Kingdom is being established and men won to it. As Bishop Anderson put it once, the Church is the executive agency of the Kingdom by which it is spread through the world. This does not belittle the Church nor make it of no importance, rather it makes its importance more marked and more definite.

## IV

When we turn again to the New Testament to study the Church we find that there are certain ideas about it which stand out. First of all we are struck by the names which are used for its members. Three of them are notable and at once suggest special relationships to God. The Christians were called brethren, and St. Paul emphasized that they are children of God through adoption into a relationship to Him which justifies their calling Him Father and calling each other brethren. They are disciples, those who are taught by Jesus Christ through the Apostles, who in this way are fulfilling the Master's command not only to make disciples but to teach them, and they are thus learners at the school of God's Incarnate Son. But in the Epistles, especially those of St. Paul, though he is not alone in this usage, another and strange expression ap-

pears, one that has come to have a special meaning quite restricted from the broad use of the Apostles. I mean the word Saint, which at once suggests not only the ideal of a holy life but the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit through whom this life is possible. Bishop Matthews, from whom I have taken this illustration, points out that these three words imply a belief in the Christian of the New Testament days in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, and so are an indirect evidence but one none the less positive to the teaching of the Trinity. There is a fourth word which emphasizes the part which God Himself plays in the Church. Jesus Christ called men to Him; He chose whom He would; He appointed men of his choice. St. Peter recognised these things when he began his description with the words a "Chosen generation." This activity on God's part in putting us into the Kingdom is expressed in the word Elect or Chosen Ones.

Over against this moving on God's part is the surrender of men of their own will to His call, which we describe by the word Faith, and Faith is just as important an element in the life of the Church as it was in the growth of the Kingdom as recorded in the Gospels.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians St. Paul uses a figure which no study of the Church in the New Testament can omit. I speak to my friend and he hears what I say. How is it possible?

It is because he and I have bodies. So far as we know there is no possibility of men reaching each other, certainly with any confident assurance of the facts, unless they have bodies. My body, his body, this is that through which I make myself known to him and he to me. St. Paul in speaking of the Church describes it as the Body of Christ. What does he mean? Is it now, in part at least, the outward and visible form through which Jesus Christ makes Himself known to the world, reaches the world, touches men in the world and by which they reach and touch and know Him? It is the medium of knowledge and contact and power. Apart from the Church, knowledge of Jesus Christ would be impossible. Some may not agree with me perhaps, and may say that I am exaggerating the facts, that they could get this knowledge through the New Testament. But we must realize and remember, that the New Testament comes to us through the Church. It is true that in this year 1923 we could get the New Testament without the Church, or at any rate without any consciousness in us of the Church's part in the matter; we can go to a store and buy it; but let us not forget that behind this printed book there lies the fact, a fact which cannot be denied, that the New Testament was written by members of the Church to members of the Church and preserved by them and others in after generations who in turn were members of the Church. In fact the very evidence, the only evidence we have of Jesus Christ

is through His Body the Church. We experience, through contact within our own souls, we know Him in ourselves, but we get even that experience through the Church. It is for this reason that St. Paul says the Church is the Body of Christ, that through which we know Him and He reaches us.

And this explains why St. Paul calls us His members or says we are "In Christ" and speaks of us as those in whom His Spirit dwells who live by the power of that Spirit. We are "members of His Body."

## V

I cannot close this chapter without calling attention to the fact that the Church is marked, in the Creed by the four traditional characteristics. We profess our belief that the Church is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic; and we look out into Christendom and find that, as men see it, the Church seems to be none of these things. She is cleft and split asunder into warring, jangling sects who far from ancient love, too often are antagonistic to each other if they do not hate one another. She is the scorn of men for her worldliness, the selfishness and low moral tone of her people, and has been for centuries. If by Catholic we mean universal she, in her widest inclusion, only reaches a part of the Christian nations and leaves untouched countless millions of people beyond them; and if we mean or-

thodox the vagaries of belief are as many as the teachers or almost as many as the believers. While last of all, if we proclaim her Apostolic we will be laughed at by many of our fellows who care not the snap of their finger what the Apostolic customs and practises were and but little about the Apostles' teachings. What answer can we make to these objections? Must we not say, in common honesty, that the outward unity of the Church, so far as it is here on earth, is lost? And yet, down beneath there is a real unity of belief in Jesus Christ, a real acceptance of Him as Lord and Saviour, a real living union with Him through the common birth of Holy Baptism. It is true that this will not include all who profess and call themselves Christians, but none the less there is a real unity of belief and practise which exists even when not always visible; and further there is a union such as we read of in the extract from Niceta in the last chapter, between us and the hosts who have gone before.

The Holiness of the Church has always been recognised not as a thing which has no flaws, no imperfections; not even, in one sense at least, as a matter of life alone; but as the outcome of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit Who makes men able to live a holy life and leads them on from less to more; while again the countless holy ones who have laid down their lives are an unseen but none the less real witness to the holiness of the Church.

One of the oldest descriptions of the Church is that she is Catholic. I stated when discussing the Creed that this term originally meant "for all" or universal and this meaning has come to the front again in later days. In the centuries between there was the narrower sense of orthodoxy of belief. It is quite probable that the term as used in the Creed does not mean universal so much as orthodox, and that properly speaking the Church is called Catholic because she holds fast the Faith as it has been delivered. It is impossible, however, in these days to ignore the earlier meaning and we must face the question in what degree can the Church be spoken of as "for all." Experience in Christian missions is the answer to this turn of the question. No race, no people, no age, neither sex, fails to find in her the satisfaction of the soul's need. Wherever the Gospel has been carried there she has brought to the people to whom she ministers something which their soul craved and apart from her could not get and had not found. She is truly Catholic in this sense, For all. And as the catholic character of her message explains its welcome so too it explains the going on the errand of teaching. It is because she feels that she has from her Lord this truth, these gifts which the world needs, that she reaches out and seeks to compass the world with the triumph of the Cross. It is the secret of her missionary activity and of her zeal for souls. And within this same word lies her close grip upon the deposit,

that Faith once for all delivered, which we seek to understand ourselves and to hand on unimpaired to the generations to come.

Last of all there is a real recognition that the life of the Church goes back to the Apostles, that they are the guardians of the faith and of the message and of the sacraments by which the life is assured. The Church is not some new organization whose beginnings are of recent days. Hers is no mushroom growth springing up of a night, nor like the gourd which sheltered Jonah has she suddenly spread abroad. Her growth has been a long one, and her life reaches back across the centuries. In the beginnings, when the twelve men whom Jesus Christ Himself had called to be Apostles had won their first converts, we read that the disciples continued in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread and the prayers. The Church in those days was apostolic not only because of the presence of the Apostle among them but because of this continuity. The same character must mark her today if she is to keep her right to this name. It was not added as a Note of the Church just for a name. It was rather a distinction by which men might know among the warring groups of Christians those who had the truth and the grace which the Master came to give, by the fact that they reached back in a continuous history to the Apostles. It would be impossible at this time to point out in detail our own claim to this heritage. But

we must not forget nor allow ourselves to belittle the fact that our own beloved Church does reach back along the lines well known and definitely recognised to the days of the Apostles. In broadest terms these are that we owe our life as a part of the Church Universal to our mother in England, whose history goes back unbroken into the second century. That she in turn derived her Christian life from the Church in Gaul, from whom in later years she again received a new infusion of strength. The ancient Gallic Church is one of the early outgrowths of second century missionary activity. Its martyrs meet us in the pages of the mid-second century and the story of its conversion carries us back almost to the days when St. Paul and St. Peter were in Rome. We are quite confident that the impulse which carried the message to Spain, did not leave the other province un-taught. The line runs back over great reaches of time to the days of the Apostles. Our mother has handed us no stone as we have sought at her hands the bread of life. Her heritage is ours and with her we reach across the ages to that Apostolic origin which won for the Church in earlier days this note, Apostolic. It is to be noted that this historic continuity is closely bound up with the question of Orders. The succession within the Church is a succession which finds as its links the bishops. They are in the Church, they are not the Church; but as in the earliest days the Apostles were the links

with the Lord Jesus carrying on what He gave and handing it on to others, so in later days the bishops in turn were the similar links handing on what they received and assuring to the coming generation the possession of those things which the Apostles themselves received from our Lord. This explains the importance of the Apostolic lineage of the ministry, and justifies us in our insistence on the one hand that our own orders have this inheritance and on the other that this inheritance is essential not only to the well being but to the very being of the Church itself.

Bishop Johnson of Colorado expressed this on one occasion when he pointed out that the Church is marked after all by two great facts of her life. On the one hand there is Continuity which shows us her life in one unbroken sweep from the Apostles to the present. The golden thread as it were which ties us to them in this long unbroken reach, which touches hand to hand through nearly sixty generations, is the line of those on whose heads have been laid the hands of those who were in their several generations the shepherds and bishops of the soul. And as Continuity is the one mark so Unity is the other. And the Unity of which Bishop Johnson spoke is the unity in the Sacrament of the Altar, where through those same sixty generations countless millions of faithful souls have knelt week after week and received from the hand of the priest the mysterious food of

the Body and Blood of Christ and have been thus made one in Him and He in them as they were partakers of the one Loaf and drank of the one Cup of the Blood of the Saviour. Outward unity may seem broken, many may profess and call themselves Christians, but deep within is that inner unity of the Water and the Blood which none can break; for the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against the Church which Jesus Christ Himself built, and into which men are called. "They do not make the Church by coming. They are called into that which already exists; they are recognised as members when they are within; but their membership depends upon their admission, and not upon their constituting themselves into a body in the sight of the Lord." It is this idea of the Church which we inherit and in which we believe and because the portion of the Church in which we have our part has this continuity and life we are sure that we are partakers of the grace and believers in the truth which the Lord Himself gave to the world through his Apostles.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SACRAMENTAL SYSTEM

We now come to the discussion of the topic which goes to the root of the difference between Catholic and Protestant, the Sacramental system. Every one of us recognises that there are, today, as there have been for four centuries, two types of Christians; and that they belong, broadly speaking, to the two groups which we call Catholic and Protestant. Both profess to believe in Jesus Christ as God, both believe that men must live a godly life to attain happiness, and that Jesus Christ helps men to do this. But the question at issue between them is how this is done.

At the forefront of our discussion we must look for just a moment at the common Protestant idea that Christianity is a religion of a Book. In a certain very real sense this is true of the Protestant conception of it. But it is not true of Christianity itself. It cannot be true, for Christianity had from thirty to sixty years of active life behind it before a word of the New Testament was written, and at least a century had passed before these several writings were brought together to form the collection

which we call the New Testament. That century saw the spread of the Christian Faith from Jerusalem to Spain, into Egypt and Arabia, and quite probably into eastern lands of which we have no record. Christianity is a religion with a Book, and in this it is like all other great religions; but it is not founded upon that Book.

We find that men believe that Jesus Christ helps them to live the life which He revealed in His own life and teaching, but the Protestant believes that this is done by the inspiration of example, by the incentive of a hope of heaven, by some mysterious power of the Holy Spirit; while the Catholic Church tells us that the help which Jesus Christ gives comes to men through sacraments and makes the sacramental life the heart and soul of her teaching and practise. To her these sacraments are outward visible signs not to warm the heart and quicken the will and arouse the imagination, but means and pledges by which men actually receive from our Lord a divine gift of help and strength. This Catholic belief the Protestant does not accept and often absolutely denies and bitterly opposes.

There is a third distinction between these two types of Christians which is of great importance in the light of modern teaching. In all the ages of the Church St. John's words have described her belief about our Lord as the one who tells us about God. "No one," says the Apostle, "has ever seen God at any time, the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father he hath

declared him." Christianity has always until recent years taught us that it is a religion based upon a revelation of God in His incarnate Son, and that when He revealed truth He gave us what we could not find out for ourselves. Modern Protestantism, under the influence no doubt of that line of teaching which Huxley put into its philosophical forms and to which he gave the name Evolution, has come to accept pretty broadly the belief that man has been working out through the ages the problem of religion and that Christianity represents the development, many would say the highest development, of that process. "Man has 'by searching found out God,'" and since the first century men, under the inspiration of the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, have come not only to an increasingly clearer knowledge of what is true, but to knowledge of new truth about God. We are not surprised then to find that the interest of the more advanced thinkers of Protestantism dwells more on what Jesus Christ said than on what He did, and that they are concerned with the significance, in the solution of the philosophical problems of the universe, of His teaching rather than of His actions. To the Catholic the essential problem is not this philosophical speculation, though the true Catholic is not indifferent to the solution of these great questions, but the significance in life, both for mankind as a whole and for the individual, of God's love as revealed in the facts of Christ's birth and death, His

resurrection and ascension. He is interested in knowing primarily who Jesus of Nazareth is and what He did far more than in the contribution He made to the solution of the riddle of the universe. This does not mean that our Lord did not give any key to that riddle, nor that this key is a matter of indifference, but that the great practical issue for men is how to live as He taught men to live and through Him to come into a living fellowship with God. Christianity, as the Church sees it, is a religion which not only tells us about God and life by reaching back to Christ, but also and in a very real sense brings Christ to us; and the method by which we come to Him and He to us, in a vital personal union, is that which is called the Sacramental System. Because we have kept this truth clearly enshrined in our Prayer Book and made it an essential thing in our religious life we dare to say, in spite of our divisions and failures, that we are a part of the Catholic Church. We may be, as Bishop Anderson said: "A Catholic Church in a Protestant atmosphere"; we may seem to men to be aligned with Protestant Christianity rather than Catholic because of our separation from Rome; and some may think that we are actually only one of the Protestant bodies as men call us and we unfortunately proclaim upon the title page of the Prayer Book; but so long as we keep the Sacramental System in its present place in our life and teaching we are truly Catholic in that great es-

sential matter which separates the two great divisions of Western Christendom.

## I

The Sacramental idea is not peculiarly a religious idea in principle. It underlies every part of our life. We all recognise the existence of two worlds, of which we are a part, the world of material things and the world of spirit. I look out across the hills upon a wonderful vista of mountains; they rise roll upon roll until their tops meet the heavens. Night comes on and her purpling shadows fill the hollows and the valleys lie in darkness. Soon out of the deep blue of the skies the stars begin to show and as night goes on the heavens become a mass of twinkling points of light. I know that all this is but the material universe, rock and earth and tree and the molten suns whose far off light can only reach my eyes when our own sun is hid behind this earth. But that scene is more to me than a material thing. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." That mysterious beauty of the starlit night arouses in me deep longings, a sense of awe and wonder, and somehow I feel myself in the presence of God. The outward visible beauty has spoken to me of an invisible Being whom I cannot see. So too, when, perhaps, I sit in the quiet stillness of an evening and reach out and touch my child's hand, I feel not only

flesh and blood, mere material things, but there is a subtle indescribable feeling, which we have all in one way or another experienced, that is the touch not of hand and hand but of heart and heart, of soul and soul. We know nothing save as we learn it through outward signs and symbols. We cannot express our inner life save by some bodily action, and there have been, there are today, teachers who go so far as to tell us that this outer life is the only real life and that there is no inner life, but that what we call the inner is but the reactions of our neurons and the sensations of our physical being.

The inward reaches us through the outward not only in our personal intercourse but in the larger experience of life. We know innumerable instances of it; our Flag, our Money, our Newspapers, the Courtesies of society, are but examples chosen haphazard, of the truth that in every avenue of life we express the inward realities, the things that count, by some outward symbol which has no value in itself but finds its value because of the fact that it stands for something which has real worth. This expression of the inward through the outward is a common place of human life, true absolutely independently of religion, but it is none the less true in the religious sphere because it is true outside that sphere; and the principle which is thus expressed is the principle which lies beneath the Sacramental System. God, willing to give us

help, gives it to us by outward signs which are both vehicles and evidence of His grace.

## II

When God determined to give man a new start and to open to him vistas of hope fulfilled and of life restored; to take away the cloud which had hid Him from man's eyes; and to open the gate by which man could enter once more into fellowship with his Father in Heaven; God made use of this universal principle. He sent His Son into the world. But how? In the only way by which men could see Him, under outward form. He was made man. The great sacrament, the most wonderful outward and visible form of an inward and spiritual grace, is the Incarnation itself. God, who is pure spirit and as such invisible to our physical sight, took form so that men might see Him; and the form He took was the form of man, not that it was only so that men might see Him, but that it was so that He could best reach us; and further as one of us, accomplish the purposes of Redemption. "God was manifested in the flesh," is St. Paul's way of stating it; God "tabernacles with us," is St. John's expression, "He dwelt among us" in outward visible form. We must remember that it was in this material form that He did things for men. He touched them and they saw and heard and at His word walked and were cleansed, they who had been blind and deaf, lame and

leprous. His voice bade the paralyzed arise and take up his bed and gave him strength to do this otherwise impossible thing. The woman touched the border of His garment, and the misery of half her life departed but strength went out from Him. The Lord Jesus accomplished things with men because as God incarnate He actually touched them, touched not only their hearts by his love and sympathy but their bodies by His own body.

Did His touch stop when He ascended? Was it by a derived power, without actual contact with the Master that the apostles wrought? And if their miracles—for St. Luke tells us they worked miracles—were by such delegated power, was there no other power such as touched their souls, that came from contact with Him and made them strong against the power of evil? St. John uses a word in the record of our Lord's great discourses on the night in which He was betrayed that is very suggestive. Our Lord was telling the Apostles of their personal dependence upon and their relationship to Him, and to make it clear He used the figure of the Vine and the Branches. The life is in the Vine, the fruit we know is borne upon the branches through the life which is in the vine. He says; “Without Me ye can do nothing,” or to translate the Greek proposition still more literally “apart from Me,” “separated from Me,” ye can do nothing. Their power came from union, vital union with Him. In view of this statement of our Lord it is very

significant that St. Paul's phrase of the relationship between the Christian and the Lord is "in Him." We are united to Him, we are in Him.

What is this union and how can we get it? Let me remind you just by reference of the figure which the Apostle used when he called the Church the Body of Christ and with this remind you of that other expression in the Epistle to the Romans where he speaks of us as members of each other in the body and so interdependent. Our union with Christ is the union with Him through membership in His body. This membership is not belonging to a society. St. Paul was no modern sectary. He had no conception of the Church as a company of believers, who by virtue of their common belief and admission into the company, form a society. They were in Christ, members of His Body, and because of this they were members not only of the Body but "one of another."

Membership in the Body of Christ implies, yes it involves, life which is from Him. As He Himself told Nicodemus men enter into the Kingdom, i. e. to use the Apostle's phrase His Body, by birth and the birth is spiritual because His Body is spiritual. It could have been no other sort of birth because of this fact of the spirituality of the Body. But it was not some invisible birth, because again the Body while spiritual was visible under its outward form of the members of the Church. The birth into the Body was of necessity by some outward form. It is

however most important at this point to insist that it is a real birth with all that birth involves of the entering into a new relationship. Let us not forget that this is in reality the whole of what we call birth. The child is by birth entering a new relationship with the world and his family. He is what he was before, but not under former conditions and so we say he begins to live a new life. It is exactly this that comes in the spiritual birth, by which we enter the Body of Christ. We enter a new relationship both to Him and to our fellows, and as such we enter into a new life. The relationship is primarily with God through Jesus Christ. We are made members of Christ and because of that we become, in a sense in which we were not before, the children of God, and we enter into the privileges of the Kingdom of Heaven. Baptism incorporates us into Christ's Body, makes us members of Him, gives us new life, as we are grafted as branches into the Vine.

This is the meaning of the old phrase "The sacraments are the extension of the Incarnation." They are means of applying the Incarnate Christ to men, by which means He actually touches them under outward form; and the signs which are pledges of the reality beneath. And this union with Himself is what Jesus Christ wanted to secure to men.

We shall not enter now upon the discussion of the number of the sacraments. This depends upon the exact meaning of the word. If it be

"ordained by Christ Himself" the answer is one thing; if it be "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace" the answer may well be another. But there are three aspects of life which must have expression, and as members of a living Body we must expect to find them in the experience of those in the Body. If we are to have real life in the body there must be not only birth into it, but food and power.

I have already said enough of that Sacrament which is the beginning of Christian life in the soul, Holy Baptism. This must come first. There can be no union with our Lord, no contact with Him, no normal giving of strength until this is accomplished. I am willing to admit, in theory, that God is not bound by sacraments and that He can, if He will, give spiritual strength without them; but it is absolutely abnormal and exceptional, and we have no right whatever, no slightest ground, for believing that He will make us the exception and give us grace unless we belong to His Body. Our Lord Himself has put this truth so plainly that one should think there was no room for discussion, but none the less in spite of His plainness of speech men rebel against the teaching, and yet there the words stand; "Except a man be born of water and the spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." It is further true, it seems also indisputable, that where the contact with Him has not been made no other gift of grace can enter. The life cannot flow from the Vine to

the branch until the branch is grafted into the Vine. This explains why an unbaptized person cannot receive the Holy Communion as a spiritual food, and why we ought never to think of giving other sacraments to men until they have been born into the sphere of the sacramental gifts by the first of all the sacraments, Holy Baptism.

Life cannot continue, so far as we know it in the world, without food. If any of us should go without food for any great period we would lose strength, and sooner or later die. If a child is deprived of food it also dies, but it dies sooner than we would. Therefore, by parallel and the parallel is the Lord's own, we must have food for our souls, and we must partake of that food. Here again we have the same sacramental principle. Spiritual things can only be given, with certainty of reception, through material things. We turn to the Gospels and we read of the Lord taking bread and wine, the simplest elements of food as used in His day, and making them the vehicles by which men should receive the food of the soul. And that food, mark you, according to His own words, is Himself, under the two essential elements of flesh and blood, "the true food and the true drink," as He said at Capernaum. It is not something material. The disciples thought it was, when He said the words, as, something that was to come in the future; but, when the time for the Institution came, then they understood their mistake and

found that they have a sacrament, i. e., the two familiar elements of material food serve as the media for giving them His own self for the support of their spiritual life. The outward form is but the vehicle of the inner reality, and that reality is not something which appeals to their imagination or sentiment, it is a vital thing in itself, endued with life and capable of conveying life to them who receive it. And further we must remember that it is food for the spirit and so its reality is not material form but the living presence of a spiritual reality, which has in itself life of the sort which the sacrament is intended to convey. Furthermore, as the Lord Himself taught, the living presence within the sacrament is nothing less than His own presence; they who partake of the outward form partake of Him, in actual real participation, but as He is spiritual, reaching their souls through material things, so in this sacrament He comes in spiritual—but none the less real—presence to reach their spirits by the vehicle of material things.

There is a third necessity; life and food are not enough if we are to accomplish anything. We must have power. In the material life this power comes largely from the strengthening quality of the food which we eat, partly from our training and exercise. In the spiritual world the same thing is true; spiritual power in a very real sense comes to us from the spiritual food, but we have more than that. There is

a special gift which is the indwelling of the Spirit and this is the peculiar source of power to the soul of the Christian. As our Lord Himself said to the Eleven on the day of His Ascension the Spirit would come and they would be endued with power from on high. Once more the gift is of a sacramental character; it comes by means of outward signs and vehicles, not in this instance of Christ's own appointed form or matter so far as the scriptural records tell us, but under the guidance of the Holy Spirit Himself. The manner of giving, as we see very plainly in the Acts, is by the laying on of hands, together with special directive prayers which tell the purpose for which the power is given. The spiritual gift of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost is given by the outward physical, and so material action, and as such is truly sacramental.

## III

Sacraments, then, in the broadest sense are the outward means by which, through the use of material things, we are joined to Christ's Body, born into it and through union with the Body are made one with Him and receive from Him food for our soul's life and power to fulfil our responsibilities in this life and prepare for the life beyond. It may not be necessary to say more than we have of what constitute sacraments, but it may not be amiss to remind you that in a formally exact sense there are always

two and sometimes three elements to be considered in connection with them. There is always the outward part, which is spoken of as Form and Matter; the inward part, which is the spiritual grace or power given; and then, in the Eucharist especially, there is the actual Spiritual presence through which the grace is conferred. By Form we mean the appointed words; in Holy Baptism these are those which St. Matthew records as part of the Lord's command, "The Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost"; in the Holy Eucharist the Form is not specified by our Lord Himself, but the words which He used in the Institution have always been used and with them is coupled, in almost all liturgies in some form or another, the Invocation of the Holy Spirit. In Confirmation there is no commonly accepted Form. The Matter of Holy Baptism and of the Holy Eucharist are of the Lord's appointment, water in the former, bread and wine in the latter; in Confirmation the laying on of hands is the equivalent to the Matter, with which in the Eastern and Roman communions there is the use of oil in anointing. In Holy Baptism the grace is described in the Prayer Book in these terms, "A death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness; for being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath we are hereby made the children of grace." In the Holy Communion this is the "strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our

bodies are by the Bread and Wine." In the Holy Eucharist we have, in addition, the presence of the "Body and Blood of Christ which are spiritually taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper," becoming, to use His term, the "true Food" and "true Drink" of our souls.

This question of the constitution of a Sacrament involves rather careful distinction and raises controversial points between us and the Churches of the East. We make a distinction, and feel that it is a perfectly valid one, between the two "Sacraments of the Gospel" as they are called, and the other commonly called lesser sacraments, lesser not because of their value but because they do not have form and matter appointed by our Lord Himself so far as the records tell us. This distinction is not known to nor recognised by the ancient churches of the East. They make no difference in quality, but say that all sacraments recognised as such by the Church are of equal value, and in place of our accurate answer; "Two only as generally necessary to salvation," to the question "How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in His Church," they count seven as all equally valid sacraments. So far as the West is concerned it was not until the twelfth century that the question of the number of the Sacraments had created enough discussion to demand an answer. Peter Lombard is largely responsible for the determination of the seven in the West and

from his day the larger number have been recognised as truly sacraments though only two of them are of direct appointment by our Lord. These seven are first those which give life and food, Baptism and the Holy Communion, which are of Christ's appointment; then those which secure the gift of the Holy Ghost as an endowment of power, that general gift which all Christians should receive in Confirmation and the particular gifts of Holy Orders by which men are fitted for their work as Deacons, Priests and Bishops. These four are of more general importance than the other three by which men and women are bound together in the bonds of Holy Matrimony, receive forgiveness of sins in Absolution or Penance, and are strengthened to face sickness and death in Unction. You see at once the difference of importance in the life of the Church, possibly in that of the individual, between the first four and the last three, just as you see the difference of importance between those which our Lord instituted and those which the Holy Ghost taught men to use. But whatever be their origin, the significant point is that the Church conceives them as means of grace, as outward signs by which that same spiritual power which came from our Lord Himself while on earth, comes to us today:

## IV

We have been thinking of Sacraments in terms

of outward and inward, as media by which we receive assurance of the gifts of grace which they bring us through union with Jesus Christ. There is another view without which we cannot understand the practical side of the Sacramental System. To some minds the Sacraments are like charms, they operate in a purely mechanical way. We do our part by receiving them and God does the rest. To others they are merely forms or rites which we perform, but they are of virtually no practical value, they carry no gifts.

The truth is quite contrary to both these views. The Sacraments, on the one hand, as we have seen, do definitely carry gifts, and on the other hand we are sure that they are not charms which work without us. The Church tells us very plainly that there are certain prerequisites without which we receive them to no good whatever. We have seen that Baptism is itself a prerequisite for all other sacramental gifts. We should see, if we had time to study the question in detail, that Confirmation, under normal conditions, is required before Holy Communion and both before the gift of Orders, while Penance deals with the cleansing of the soul and is needed whenever the soul is stained with sin. These conditions apply to one sacrament following on another; but there is something more personal in character which stands as a prerequisite for even Holy Baptism. No one can receive it, nor any other sacramental gift to his soul's health

without Faith; and the Church tells us that Repentance is a further requirement for the reception of both Holy Baptism and the Holy Communion. The reason for this is not hard to find. The Sacraments are the way by which we receive the gifts of Christ, by which we come into union with Him, but unless we give ourselves to Him, unless we submit our will to Him and are ready to accept what He offers, He remains unable to help us. We have in the Gospels more than one instance where Christ's inability to accomplish results was directly due to the lack of faith in those who needed His help, and the very emphasis which He lays on faith implies the same thing. The basis of sin is rebellion and the thing. The basis of sin is rebellion and the only cure for rebellion is submission and penitence, or the change of view which makes us see life as God means us to see it. Therefore Repentance and Faith are prerequisites for receiving sacramental grace.

The sacramental life, like all life, is a progress. We go from strength to strength. Let me, as I close this discussion, try to describe the progress of a soul living in constant use of the Sacraments. I shall confine myself to the three which, with us, are of ordinary and general use, Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion as the gifts of life and power, and food, through which we have union with and strength from our Lord.

When we are born we enter life with innate tendencies on the spiritual side as truly as on

the physical and mental. The most outstanding tendency is to sin. Every human being, as surely as he is born into the world, is certain to sin. There is an inheritance which always manifests itself in sin; the character of the manifestation is not the same for all, men's sins differ and the temptation which I find it almost impossible to resist another might never feel, and the reverse is equally true; but of whatever sort my sin may be, it is due in no slight degree to the fact of my inherited tendency to commit it. This tendency is as it were a malignant germ whose development is sure and under some conditions is apt to be rapid. How can this germ be killed? How can sin be destroyed in me? Jesus Christ in His own life was absolutely free from sin. Whenever He touched sin He cured it. The wholeness of body which contact with Him brought was often but typical of a wholeness of soul within. More than once He prefaced the physical cure by forgiving the man's sin. What contact with Him in the flesh accomplished while He was here on earth contact with Him always does. His is the power and authority to forgive sin and He does it by personal contact and as we have seen this personal contact is ours through the Sacraments. We get it first when we are made a part of Him in our Baptism. The first assault is then made upon our tendency to sin. We receive Him, as it were as an anti-dote, an anti-toxin if I may be permitted to use that word in this connection. Sin, in us, re-

ceives its first assault. Then—too often alas it is much postponed and sin in consequence gets a hold which is harder to break—at last we are confirmed. We receive His promised gift of power, power to do what He expects and desires, power to use His gifts; the Holy Spirit enters our soul and takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us. Then we begin to receive the Holy Communion. We have seen that this is the food of life, but we must not forget that the food is no less than our Lord Himself, verily and indeed taken and received in the Lord's Supper. He re-enters our souls again and again, He comes into personal contact with us, and, as the antitoxin of certain diseases oft repeated finally destroys the power of the germ and makes us immune from that sickness, so the constant coming of our Lord in the Holy Communion, if we welcome Him by faith and repentance and love, gradually destroys the power of sin, kills the tendency, and the soul becomes more and more as God would have it and we grow into the likeness of our Lord, until when this earthly life is ended we go forth into the next world as one of those who have realized in themselves the power of Jesus Christ, Whose sacramental presence together with the power of His Holy Spirit has gradually perfected us into some semblance of His own perfection. The progress is not in actual experience one unbroken growth in holiness. In most of us sin re-asserts itself. Our faith grows dim, our will to holiness becomes

weak and we give ourselves over into a life of lawlessness before God. The return is not easy. Its way is the way of sorrow and penitence, of confession and humiliation, the way of cleansing; but when once we have again set our feet on the path of peace, though the journey be harder for a while because of our failure, the same sacramental contact with our Lord once more deadens the power of sin and we can again hope to conquer in the end. But the power, as the Church sees it, is not ours but His working in us, and the way by which He comes to us is the way of those outward pledges of His inner grace which we call Sacraments, the regular use of which is the mark of true churchmanship.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN DUTY

Christianity requires us to live a certain kind of life. The ideal of that life is peculiar to Christianity, and the fact that it is to be lived not on the basis of obedience to particular precepts but as the expression of great principles of living, makes a demand upon the Christian to which no other religion approaches. If we were to speak in absolute accuracy we would not talk of the Principles of Christian Duty, but of the Principles for the guidance of a Christian in right living. The distinction is the difference between "I ought" as a matter of obligatory precepts, and "I live, yet not I but Christ." I, who by my baptism am "in Christ," i. e., as we have seen, a part of His Body, in actual contact with Him through Sacraments, must live in a certain way. If I am to fulfil the conditions of my relationship to Him, if I am to act, as a member of that Body which is His, there is a compulsion not of formal duty laid down in external laws and ordinances, but the compulsion of an interior life that finds its truest expression in living as Christ revealed we should live. This discussion would be incomplete if we did

not attempt to search out and find what is that ideal of life which our Lord left behind Him in the world; and what are the motives which will help us to fulfil that ideal in ourselves. To this then we shall now turn.

## I

St. Athanasius in his treatise "The Incarnation of the Word of God," wrote these words: "The Word of God came in His own Person, in order that as He was the image of the Father, He might be able to recreate the man made after that image" . . . "for as when a portrait painted on a panel has disappeared in consequence of external stain, there is need again for him to come whose the portrait is that the likeness may be renewed on the same material, because for the sake of his picture the material itself on which it has been painted is not thrown away but the likeness is retraced upon it; so, similarly, the all Holy Son of the Father, being the image of the Father, came into our sphere to renew man, made after Himself, and to find him as one lost, through the remission of sins, the which He Himself says in the Gospel. 'I came to seek and to save that which was lost.' Wherefore also He says to the Jews: 'Except a man be born anew,' not signifying as they understood Him the birth from woman, but meaning the soul regenerated and recreated in the image of God." This description gives us a true

account of one aspect of the life-work of our Lord. He came to restore the image of God, i. e. to show men what God's ideal was, and by union with Himself to recreate them in that image. Jesus Christ revealed to men an ideal life as God meant men to live it, and the ideal we can find only in His own life. We will fail if we search for it in His teaching alone. Certain parts of the ideal found expression in the memories of the Apostles not in the words but in the deeds of their Master. If we are to understand what His ideal of life was, what has been set before us as an example of Christian living, we must study His life as a whole, and from the sum total of that life seek to extract the important things which make up the revelation of human life as it should be.

The first fact which we recognise in that study is the tremendous reality of sin. The "mysterious fact," as Ottley calls sin, is recognised by men of all nations of the world. They do not understand it, they often do not know the meaning of that strange discontent and discomfort at life. They have tried in many ways to express it, and to be free from the thing itself. With imperfect knowledge of God they cannot know the whole truth about it. But the Christian knows, and this "mysterious fact" of common human experience is what the Scripture calls sin, the failure to do what God expects of men, the deliberate refusal to obey His commands and to follow the way which He points

out for men to walk. "Man everywhere and always has felt himself called to a life of righteousness and fellowship with God and has perpetually fallen short of it." Whether we read St. Paul, the Christian Apostle, or Ovid, the Roman poet, we read the same thing, "We desire the better things, we follow those that are worse"; "The evil that I would not that I do, and the good that I would that do I not." There is no question that St. John is right when he says: "The whole world lieth in the wicked one." This great world embracing fact of sin was a tremendous reality to Jesus Christ. More than once He bears witness to it by the way He brings forgiveness of sin. One of the most notable instances is that in which He welcomed and forgave the sinful woman who had loved too much and fallen; "go in peace," He said to her. "The Lord hath put away thy sin." The瘫痪者 whose four friends let him down through the roof till he lay before the Lord, heard the amazing words: "Son, thy sins have been forgiven thee." Our Lord did not confine the evidence of His horror of sin and its constant presence in the world to Galilee. On several occasions He let the men of Jerusalem and of Perea know what He thought of it, and when He was with the disciples on Easter night He breathed on them and fulfilled the promise He had made before to St. Peter alone, saying the words which have been constantly used in Ordination to the Priesthood; "Whose soever sins ye remit they

are remitted unto them and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained.” The first claim to power which He made in Galilee was the right to forgive sin and He proved He had the power by making the paralytic well; the first power He granted the Eleven Apostles on the Resurrection night was this power to forgive.

These cases are very plain; equally plain in its witness to the fact and effect of sin are the three great parables of God’s love which St. Luke records in the fifteenth chapter, the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Prodigal Son, to give them their familiar titles, titles which so completely miss the point of each story. In each of these parables there is the picture of sin: the sheep has gone astray, the coin has been lost, the prodigal son has wilfully left the companionship of father and brother and gone off into a life of gross self-indulgence and dissoluteness; in each there is the definite suggestion of the possibility of return and the happiness which is sure to result, not curiously enough as pictured in these parables, the happiness of the penitent but in heaven, i. e. both among God’s companions and in His own loving heart because of their penitence. As Jesus Christ Himself said “He came to seek and to save that which had been lost.” This was His purpose, as even His name signifies, “Jehovah shall save,” and as the angels proclaimed at His birth He was “Born a Saviour.”

Christ teaches us not only the reality of sin

but its universality. There are none free from it; as St. Paul put it "Forasmuch as all have sinned and come short," so our Lord understood it. This and only this can explain the phrases in St. John 3, not only the words "except a man be born again he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven" but the other verse which is sometimes considered to be the Apostle's comment rather than the Master's own words: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that who soever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." More than in the English the Greek phrases are as general as it is possible to put them. They are, in the one case, the indefinite "any one." And in the other the inclusive "every one." There is no room for exception. What is true of one is, essentially, true of every one. The details of its form may vary, does vary, but the characteristic beneath is the same in all.

There is, however, one exception in this story of human sin, and it is the exception which makes the fact more striking and defines the Lord's attitude toward it. He Himself is free from sin and He knows it and glories in it. "Which of you," He said, "convinceth me of sin?" The words were said in the face of the bitterest opposition, and would have been snapped up immediately if possible; but St. John relates the incident to drive home the complete sinlessness of the Master. This is evidenced, on the other side, by the positive statements of our

Lord. He did not come to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him, to do what God the Father wanted His Incarnate Son to do was the purpose of His life; and as He thought of it, at the end of that life as He faced death, He, recalling His readiness to do this, said: "I am content to do it, yea Thy law is within my heart." And further He had confidence, a confidence which can have but one explanation, that He actually had done all that God His Father had expected of Him. "I have fulfilled thy will, O my God," He said; and St. John writing of the last moments on the Cross records that our Lord, when He knew that the whole of God's purpose and plan was accomplished, said "I thirst." It was this complete agreement of will and purpose, this absolute fulfilment of the Father's wish which won for Jesus Christ the twice repeated commendation from His Father "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." We may confidently believe then that sin had no place in the life of Jesus Christ, whether it was by failure to do right or by actually committing wrong.

The Lord had a tremendous sense of the reality and universality of sin; but what is sin? The importance of this question cannot be overstressed; for upon the answer will depend our attitude toward our Lord and His work. St. John's definition is blunt, abrupt, and to men of today distasteful, but it is true. He says "sin is lawlessness" or as we might paraphrase it rebel-

lion. At the center of personality lies the will. However we may explain it psychologically, so far as the moral values are concerned, man is definitely self-determinative. He decides his own conduct in the last analysis, no matter what part environment may play; and the whole question as to the true character of sin depends on this fact that there is on the one side God's will and on the other man's will; and when a man sets his will against God's and refuses to do what God wishes him to do, becomes a law unto himself, then he sins. This is lawlessness, rebellion against God is the setting man's own will in opposition to the will of God.

But we will find a number of explanations of this fact of human life which take the will out of sin and make our conduct "wrong doing" which has no moral quality. Some people describe this as "imperfection" i. e., man is striving upward and he has not yet attained that completeness and finish in life which God meant him to have. There is no moral quality in conduct in this definition, so far as we know morals. On the other hand sin is regarded as disease, in which once more there is no moral quality because there is no power in the man's will to decide on the result of his own conduct. He may be, like the prodigal, "beside himself" but unlike him he cannot "come to" for there is nothing to turn from, he has simply to overcome the disease and go on to better things. Still another conception of sin makes it an "animal impulse" which

is natural and normal but this too robs conduct of all its finer elements and reduces man, morally, to the level of the beasts. These examples—they are only some of the alternates—are all alike in that they forget the place of the will in man's life, and that they ride flat against the teaching of Holy Scripture from which we learn that God made man in His own image, giving him a moral nature with all its possibilities, and started him in a life of fellowship with Himself from which man departed, "fell" is the proper word, by an act of rebellion or lawlessness; and that in consequence and in addition he passed on to his children a nature prone to evil and apt to sin.

## II

The second fact which the Gospels show us in Christ's life and the Epistles stress is that God was not content to leave man thus shut out from Him, but that He sent His only begotten Son into the world to set men free from this bondage of sin and restore him to the life God intended him to have. He was to be the "Redeemer." This is a word of great controversies; perhaps I would better leave it out, but I cannot. To attempt to define it with any pretense of exactness is to undertake more than my space allows. Perhaps the simplest way will be to recall to our minds that it is the word used of setting Israel free from the bondage of Egypt, and that,

wherever you find it, the underlying idea which it describes has the same sense of deliverance. Man because of his sin is in bondage. He is a slave. We recognise this when we say that any one is a "slave to a passion" or an "addict" to something which is wrong. He is in bondage. The work of Jesus Christ is to set men free from this bondage. They cannot free themselves, there is nothing they can do to accomplish it. There is no standing place from which to secure deliverance. Man begins wrongly. Therefore our Lord came into the world without sin, and lived a sinless life even on into death, and by so doing broke the power of sin and Satan. He "led captivity captive" as the Psalmist puts it, and made it possible for each and every man to become free. In thinking of our Lord's redemptive acts we must remember that His death is a means of redemption not because He died, but because He was obedient to His Father's will clear through to death. As St. Bernard put it "It was the willing act of one who died of his own accord."

The Cross, with what follows in our Lord's own life, made it possible for man to come again into union with God. It gave an appeal to sympathy. Jesus Christ was absolutely right when He said if He were lifted up He would draw all men to Himself. The Indian chief who heard for the first time the story of God's love in sending His Son and of the death of the Son upon the Cross at the hands of His enemies and said

"I wish I had been there with my braves," felt the appeal of it. The attractiveness of the Cross is the secret of the message of Christianity to the sinner for it tells us not of the death of a sinless man,—there is no appeal save for sympathy toward him in that,—but of the love of the Father who gave His only Son to die and the love of that Son who willingly died the death of shame for us men and for our salvation. But the attraction of the Cross is not simply that of the revelation of the Love of God, it is also, and this means much to men, the promise of deliverance. He died and by His death He set men free. There is a still further message in it. He not only made it possible for men to become free but He opens the way toward help and grace, so that by His power, reaching us from Him through the sacraments, we can hope to overcome sins.

Jesus Christ did not simply reveal to us the fact of sin, but along with that revelation He made certain the equally important truth of His own triumph over sin and death that we might be delivered. He made a different life possible for us because of His death and victory. And because of this His life becomes for us an ideal for our own life. He is, as the Collect puts it an "ensample for us" and it is now, but only now, that we can turn to see what that life may tell us. I do not think we can over emphasize the truth that His life can become an ideal for us only if He has won for us the possibility of

our approaching that ideal. To set it before sinful men without opening to them a means to attain it, would be a cruelty which would utterly destroy the revelation in Him of God's love. If I must try to live as He did or even as He taught —there is no real difference—and do it by my own power I am hopeless, as men were hopeless before He came. But if His death and Resurrection broke the power of sin and Satan, and if by His Sacraments I can have His grace and strength to help me overcome my own sin, then the Cross becomes a wonderful revelation of love and I am filled with hope and have the courage to attempt to reach the goal which otherwise would be impossible.

### III

The first fact which we see in the study of our Lord's own life on earth is that it is a life of sonship with God. He is constantly conscious of this relationship. From the day when He answered His Blessed Mother in the Temple, a boy of twelve years of age, "Why did ye seek Me; did ye not know that I must be in My Father's house," even if not before that day, Jesus never forgot that He was God's Son. And this must come first with us. We, too, by our Baptism, are made the Children of God. We come into a new relationship with Him and that can never be changed. It is important to emphasize this. We may forget it, we may even

set ourselves to ignore it. We may live absolutely without any consciousness of it, and finally be outcasts from His eternal presence for ever, but none the less we are the children of God by adoption, His redeemed sons. The pull, if I may so phrase it, of birth, the force of *noblesse oblige*, the pride, proper legitimate pride, of inheritance of an honorable name is but the earthly counterpart of what this spiritual relationship means or should mean in our lives in creating an ideal for us. We are made the sons of God, and we must live as becomes sons. And no small part of our life as sons is comradeship. The tie which binds children to parents, shows itself, not unfrequently, thank God, in the closest most delightful intimacy; the boy or girl would rather, quite honestly rather, be with father or mother than any one else. The same thing is true of our relationship with our Father in Heaven. We have not only the inspiration of the fact but we have the comradeship that comes from the fact. This comradeship with us, as with our Lord, find its truest expression in prayer and communion. This is really what we mean by the saying that a Christian life is a life with God. St. Irenaeus, writing toward the end of the second century puts it in these words: "Fellowship with God is life and light and the enjoyment of the good things with Him. The separation from God is death." The more truly and fully the Christian realizes this and makes it the daily expression of his own life the more

nearly He will approach the ideal of life as Jesus Christ gave it to us.

At the bottom of this fellowship with God lies Faith. I have already spoken of Faith as the surrender of ourselves to God. It is more than that and yet it is most hard to define or even describe. No one has ever done this so well as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. To his mind it is Faith which opens the eye to the invisible world and gives reality to what we can never know by the senses. "Here we see through a glass darkly" but we see; and it is Faith that penetrates the gloom. We might almost laugh at the idea of a little water in the Name of the Trinity changing our whole relationship with God, or a bit of bread and a sip of wine bringing us food and drink for our souls; and yet the man who believes knows that these things are true and he has no difficulty in accepting them and the many other truths of Christianity which no human reasoning can ever establish beyond controversy. Faith alone can make us see, and when we see, we know and are sure that it is Faith not credulity which gives us the certainty. It is not the mere acceptance on authority of something toward which reason can but carry us part of the way. It is not merely a blind "yes" given to the call to believe. Faith is the surrender of ourselves, when our own powers have brought us to the brink of the chasm which man by himself cannot cross. It is as it were a throwing of ourselves out into the unseen and

coming up on firm ground. For that is the consequence of Faith. It does not spring from certainty but it produces it. It does not rise out of confidence but it makes us sure. And when once Faith has carried us into that state of conviction we men live by it with an assurance that nothing can disturb. How wonderful are the things that faith has accomplished in the souls of men and women. The chapter in Hebrews gives us examples. We all can recall others, for the power of Faith working in the lives of people even of today is nothing strange. We have ourselves experienced it, for we too may venture to say that we, even we, "walk by faith and not by sight" and trusting in God follow the lead of His Son's guidance.

## IV

Fellowship with God through Faith is the first characteristic of life which we see in our Lord. The second, as I read that life, is worship. I doubt if most people realize what an important place worship held in our Lord's own life. What is worship? What is its central inspiration? Many of us need to revise our idea of worship. Too many people think of it as prayer or praise or both, and are content with singing hymns and the warmth of sentiment, that inspiration of the crowd which comes from a goodly company of people joining in prayer and praise to God. But that is not the heart of worship,

though both prayer and praise accompany it. When you turn to the Old Testament you find God's revelation of what worship is. We must not let the trend of modern criticism of the Old Testament disturb us in this nor becloud our understanding. Remember, as we saw in an earlier chapter, that we need to distinguish between processes and results. However the Jewish worship may have developed, at the bottom it is a revelation from God, and this revelation of worship is used by the Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews as explaining the present life and activity of our Lord and corresponds to the vision which St. John saw on Patmos. At the center of this revelation of worship is Sacrifice. So distinctive is Sacrifice that we are accustomed to associate that idea only with Old Testament worship and to forget the New Testament application of the same principle. What then is Sacrifice? It is surely something greatly beyond the killing of a living animal and sprinkling its blood upon the Altar and then burning the flesh or in addition feasting upon a part of it. The kernel of the teaching of Sacrifice is that a life is offered in place of the life of the offerer, and that that offered life represents the surrender of the offerer's will. There is more even than this in it. Our ordinary English expression, "self-sacrificing," gives us the clue. It is giving God something which we value. How strongly Malachi brings this home when he reproves the Jew for offering poor and unworthy

sacrifices, the leavings of the flock which were of no value! We can carry the idea still further. This giving to God of a gift, the best we can give, that is offered to Him in our stead, is a token of love, and underneath worship lies not faith nor hope, not service as is sometimes said, but the gift of what we value most to one we love dearly as a token and emblem of the love we bear toward him. And God when He appointed sacrifice as a means of worship, on the one hand gave men a chance to show their devotion to Him, and on the other did so by appealing to a common instinct of men. We can now see how worship entered the life of Jesus Christ. It was there in the divinely appointed worship of the Temple in which He joined regularly. But it was there still more in His own will giving Himself up to fulfill the purpose of His Father and finally, in order to accomplish that, offering up His life on the Cross, offering it, I say, willingly, for He had power to lay it down and power to take it again. But the worship of Jesus Christ did not end with Calvary. It has a continual existence in Heaven as the Epistle to the Hebrews shows. He, in the presence of His Father, is always present as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world and by that sacrifice, unceasing in its effects, keeps open the door for us and makes our own faulty and imperfect sacrifices offered "through Jesus Christ" acceptable to our Heavenly Father. We need faith, we must have it to know God; but once we begin to

know Him we must—it is a real necessity of our being—we must offer Him the sacrifice of our wills and give Him the best we have. And our Lord has appointed a way by which we can make the most acceptable sacrifice in ordaining the Holy Eucharist, in which we not only receive the Food of life but are enabled to join with the heavenly worship “with Angels and Archangels and all the company of heaven,” and to “present ourselves, our souls and bodies a living sacrifice” acceptable to the Father because they are united with that “one full perfect and sufficient sacrifice” which His Son made on Calvary and continually pleads in the very presence of the Father. And with this offering of ourselves, our souls and bodies, there is of necessity the yielding of ourselves to Him, submitting our wills to His will, and we shall find that this yielding of our wills to Him is not a hardship but on the contrary brings us perfect freedom, the freedom of the King who is not bound by formal law. It is as the Prayer Book collect puts it “Whose service is perfect freedom,” that is, “to serve God is to reign.”

## IV

There is a third element in our Lord’s life which we must not forget as we see the way He unfolds in that life the ideal for our living. Faith enables us to see and know God, Love leads us to worship and with worship to serve. So

much has been said in recent years about service that one scarcely needs to add anything and yet after all what is service but the expression of our Love to our Lord by bringing to a successful issue His own work among men. He did not finish the work. That which He alone could do He did do, but there is something more, something far more in fact and that He left us to do. Men had to be won. He would draw all men to Himself but the medium by which that drawing is to be accomplished is other men. He wrought great works of mercy in the world, but when He gave the Apostles commission He told them they would do greater things than He had done. He cured individuals and lifted men and women, here and there, crowds no doubt, but still individuals. But He left to us the greater task of purifying society and making these things impossible. And this is a sign of His love for us and the opportunity He gives us of showing our love for Him and in so doing quickens in us the third great virtue, Christian Hope, by which we are encouraged to go forward in spite of disappointments.

Christ's revelation of life carries us a step still further. Down beneath everything in His own life and at the forefront of the Sermon on the Mount he sets Humility. When we study our Lord's life we get some idea of what Humility really is. Bishop Gore in his lectures, "Christian Moral Principles," develops the idea on the basis of St. Bernard's phrase "Humility

is the truth about ourselves," making it the spirit by which we know ourselves as we are. It was this which characterized our Lord. He knew, none better, just what He Himself was both in relation to His Father and to us men; and no false modesty, no fictitious valuations, for one moment deceived Him. It is hard for us to get this idea clearly in regard to ourselves, but after all it is really essential, if we are to make any progress in our life. The sense of what God sees in us, balanced and cheered by what God wants us to be and the love which bridges the gap between; the certainty of what we are and must be toward our fellows; these truths give our life its true perspective and we can hope to make some proper progress in following the way the Master trod and reaching the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

## V

We have been thinking of the ideal of life which Our Lord set before us in His life as well as His teaching as that to which we are to seek to attain; but more than this ideal is needed. There must be a motive. Why should we do this? Let me suggest just two sides of this question of the motive. First of all there can be no happiness save in the way He points out. We are familiar with the Beatitudes as beginning with the word "Blessed"; but as a matter of ac-

tual fact the word that is used means more literally "happy" or "to be envied." What Jesus Christ set forth was the way by which men could attain to real happiness. And beyond this expectation of happiness, something which all people desire even though they do not know how to attain it, there is the second motive, the higher one of which I have already spoken. It was love that sent the Eternal Son into the world and that made Jesus Christ suffer and die; and love begets love. To be the beneficiaries of such love as God's and not to respond to it is alas not unthinkable for it is but too common; but it does seem incredible, when once a man understands what that love truly is and has done, that he should reject it. The highest motive for the Christian to live as the Master taught is that only so can he respond to the love of God in Jesus Christ and show that he truly loves Him.

## VI

The fulfilling of the Christian life, the following of our Lord's example under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, helped by the Sacraments was in the beginning called the Way. We find St. Luke using the expression frequently in the early chapters of the Acts. It points out that there is a goal which is not here but yonder. Along the side of the stone on Dean Alford's grave in the Churchyard of St. Martin's Church in Canterbury runs in Latin this sentence "The resting

place of a traveller journeying heavenward." These words show a true comprehension of the faith of those early days. Life was a Way and death but the ending of one stage and the mysterious entering into the next where men rest ere they go onward. Life is progress, the actual going which finally brings us into the visible presence of God, where we shall see Him as He is. And if our going has been as He taught us, along the strait and narrow way but yet the Way that leads to Him, we shall not only see Him as He is but we shall enter into that wonderful company in which we shall see Jesus our Lord, and the Saints of God, and enter into the fellowship never to be broken, with those whom we have "loved long since and lost awhile," where we shall know as we are known and love will rule our every thought. Such a life will be no nirvana, no loss of personal identity which would mean the power to love; but that absolute satisfaction of which St. Augustine felt the need when he said: "My soul seeks rest and finds none save in Thee O God."

My exposition is at an end. I have tried to develop it on from the foundation in the idea of God as revealed to us in His Son, through the truths of that revelation as recorded in the Creed, made vital in the Church by which His Kingdom is established, brought to the individual soul in the Sacraments in which a man finds power to live the life which God meant him to live. One

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brief question remains: Who is sufficient for these things? No one, save as we can say with St. Paul: "I can do all things through Him who strengtheneth me."







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